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Bright Ambiguities of Heaven: Fantastic and Magic Realist Elements in the Novels of Charles Williams

by

Gail Vanterpool ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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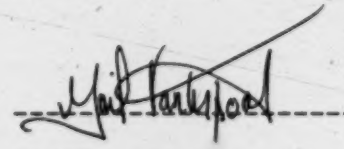

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommended to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Bright Ambiguities of Heaven: Fantastic and Magic Realist Elements in the Novels of Charles Williams submitted by Gail Vanterpool in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Abstract

The literary genres of Magic Realism and the Fantastic are alike in that they both juxtapose natural and supernatural worlds. In The Fantastic, the text affirms the exclusive validity of the rational, so the appearance of the supernatural element is problematic. Magic Realist literature, however, presents a world view which accepts the supernatural as objective fact.

Charles Williams's three novels, The Place of the Lion, Descent into Hell, and All Hallows' Eve, introduce supernatural events and Williams's personal religious beliefs of co-inherence, exchange, and substitution into a realistic framework. The thesis examines how, in Williams's novels, the supernatural is presented, how the conventions of Realism are violated, and suggests how the novels have affinities with The Fantastic and Magic Realism.

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Introduction

Charles Williams wrote seven novels, but an exact generic classification has eluded his readers. Some have described them as "supernatural thrillers" (jacket, The Place of the Lion), but the term denotes a set of reader-expectations that are misleading. We expect ghosts, doppelgängers, succubi, and grotesque forms animated by enslaved human spirits. Williams's narratives certainly contain such grotesqueries, but they are used in entirely different ways than they are used in, say, the typical Horror novel. We can be "thrilled" when reading one of his stories, yet the thrill does not come from the ghosts. What is thrilling about a Williams novel is how convincingly it portrays our ordinary world of secretaries and of walks down a city street as manifesting everywhere the Kingdom of God. Williams's specifically Christian vision places his novels far from the mainstream of the modern novel and creates difficulties with the generic classification of his work. A general introduction to Williams's theology is in order before discussing and defining two genres, the Fantastic and Magic Realism, which have definite affinities with Williams's The Place of the Lion, Descent into Hell, and All Hallows' Eve. This introduction will end with a discussion about the methods used in examining these three novels.

To Williams, every aspect of the mundane and ordinary

is potentially an image of something greater than itself. As C.S. Lewis, friend and colleague of Williams, comments, "For Williams, as for Plato, the phenomenal world--the world studied by the sciences--is primarily a reflection or copy or adaptation of something else" (Arthurian Torso 101). Williams's novels are, in part, an examination or demonstration of how this is so. Mary McDermott Shideler's Theology of Romantic Love: A Study in the Writings of Charles Williams gives a detailed account of Williams's ideas and methods, emphasizing that he does not proceed like an allegorist, by beginning with an idea and then finding an image to illustrate that idea. Instead, he begins with a thing, event, or character, and then finds in what way or ways that thing, event, or character reveals something greater than itself (13). Dante proceeds in just such a way when meeting Beatrice for the first time, for he is immediately struck by how she evidences the divine in her actual aspect. Williams describes Dante's experience in this way:

> He says there [in the Convivio] that the young are subject to a "stupor" or astonishment of the mind which falls on them at the awareness of great and wonderful things. Such a stupor produces two results--a sense of reverence and a desire to know more. A noble awe and a noble curiosity come to life. This is what had happened to him at the

> sight of the Florentine girl, and all his work consists, one way or another, in the increase of that worship and that knowledge. (The Figure of Beatrice: A Study in Dante 7)

So the apprehension of the divine in the phenomenal leads one both to worship and study the divine.

Thomas Howard's introduction to the novels of Charles Williams mentions how images, for Williams, both reveal and conceal something greater than themselves (5). Williams sums up his ideas about images in the phrase, "This also is Thou; neither is this Thou," a phrase which often occurs in his works. When we notice, for example, that a beautiful woman is an aspect of the divine, we are in effect saying, "This also is Thou." But we must, in all honesty, add, "Neither is this Thou," for obviously, a woman, no matter how beautiful, is human and not God.

Williams sees two ways through which mankind can approach images: The Way of Affirmation of Images and The Way of Rejection of Images. He is influenced in his thought by the works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, an early Christian Neoplatonist. In The Mystical Theology, Pseudo-Dionysius describes a way towards knowledge of the divine by understanding what the divine is not. God is limitless and therefore indescribable, so all earthly attempts to represent Him will be more or less false. Saints, ascetics, and mystics commonly follow this way of renouncing all known

representations of God in order to be united with Him:

> leave behind you everything perceived and understood, everything perceptible and understandable, all that is not and all that is, and, with your understanding laid aside . . . strive upward as much as you can toward union with him who is beyond all being and knowledge. (135)

The Way of Rejection of Images concentrates, therefore, on "Neither is this Thou."

But one can also concentrate on "This also is Thou," and approach God through images. Pseudo-Dionysius regards material images as educational, giving us an initial means to contemplate the divine. The contemplation of images is a necessary first step in the journey toward God, a step taken before rising beyond images through denial to contemplate the purely conceptual, or, as Pseudo-Dionysius himself puts it, "[rising] from sacred shapes and symbols to the simple peaks of the hierarchies of heaven" (The Celestial Hierarchy 147). Williams, however, finds in The Way of Affirmation of Images not just a first step toward the divine, but an entire Way or method of approach in itself. He also feels it to be a more common and more accessible Way than The Way of Rejection. Dante approaches God through images, as do most poets, like G. M. Hopkins, who proclaims that "The world is charged with the grandeur of God" ("God's Grandeur" 1). This is Williams's Way and his novels often show

individuals who are on this Way.

Although both ways concentrate on one half of the saying, "This also is Thou; neither is this Thou," neither Way can reject the saying's other half. Those on The Way of Rejection, even the most severe ascetics, must affirm to some extent the value of food, sleep, and shelter. Conversely, those on The Way of Affirmation must "remember the difference in the likeness" (The Figure of Beatrice 9), lest they be guilty of idolatry.

So, to Williams, the divine can be apprehended here on earth; the divine has a presence in the things of this world. In the language of the Church, the divine is both transcendent and immanent. The natural and the supernatural co-exist. Williams's word for this co-existence is co-inherence, the most succinct definition of which is given by Glen Cavaliero, whose book reviews all of Williams's writings. Co-inherence is a word formerly used by the Church, as the word Incarnation still is, to describe how the human and the divine were contained in Christ, and the word's usage was then extended to describe the relationship between Father, Son and Holy Ghost in the Trinity (Cavaliero viii). Williams further extends the definition of the term co-inherence, however, to describe the interrelatedness of the natural and the supernatural in all things. His definition of supernatural is drawn from that of the early Christian period:

> The use of the word supernatural has been rebuked, and indeed it is a little unfortunate. It did not imply then, nor should it ever have implied since, any derogation from the natural order. But it did imply that the order was part of and reposed on a substance which was invisible and which operated by laws greater than, if not in opposition to, those which were apparent in the visible world. (Witchcraft 14)

Williams, in fact, sees co-inherence as a basic principle of life, describing not just the interrelatedness of natural and supernatural, but the interrelatedness of all things, or "the infinite interdependence among individual things" (Shideler 62). His ideas are very similar to those of sympathetic magic. Frazer's The Golden Bough: The Roots of Religion and Folklore describes the magical practices of many ancient cultures, which "assume that things act on each other at a distance through a secret sympathy, the impulse being transmitted from one to the other by means of what we may conceive as a kind of invisible ether" (16). Medieval magic also operated on the principle of sympathy and the goal of the magician was to control the workings of this principle. Lynn Thorndike's History of Magic and Experimental Science During the First Thirteen Centuries of Our Era describes the ideas of medieval philosophers and magicians like John Dee, who felt that things emanated rays

to all other things, and received rays from them (392), or like Trithemius, who saw the world as a mirror for God and the heavens, so that by study of the world one could gain control of divine powers and perform miracles (439). To both Williams and medieval believers in magic, then, every thing in this world has a potential double nature, which Williams terms "duplex" (The Figure of Beatrice).

A second principle of life which Williams relates to co-inherence is the principle of Exchange. Exchange is "the active acceptance of co-inherence, a reciprocal movement of love within it by those who acknowledge mutual derivation" (Cavaliero viii). Williams first began to feel the force of the doctrine of exchange during World War I, when he enjoyed peace at home due to the labours and lives of his friends overseas (Hadfield 32). He saw that we all owe our lives to others, and that we also reap the fruits of others' labour. A common medium of exchange is therefore money, for we exchange money with the baker when we buy a loaf of bread, and we are ostensibly paying for those who reaped the wheat, those who transported the wheat to the baker, and for the baker's labour involved in producing the bread. Williams's term for this enjoyment of the efforts of others is often substitution, though its meaning overlaps that of exchange.

Williams also uses substitution to describe the process of carrying one another's burdens. A typical act of substitution would be that of a cleaning-woman hired to do

our housework, or of an employee typing our letters when we do not have the time. Every time that we help someone else or ask to be helped, we are participating in the act of substitution. A Christian participates in the act when he prays that his burdens be removed from him by the dispensation of the Lord. A less common act of substitution occurs when we agree to take on another's burden of fear or anxiety, and Williams asserts that this can be done. What is necessary is first an acceptance of the possibility that another can indeed take over the burden. Then the receiver of the burden must give his attention to the burden, to "imagine it, and know it, and be afraid of it" (Descent into Hell 132). When the giver of the burden next encounters the situation that previously caused fear or anxiety, he needs only to remind himself that another is now carrying that fear, and the fear should be annihilated.

These three interrelated concepts of substitution, exchange, and co-inherence attain their fullest expression in the City of God. Williams "sees all natural human groups, from families to the community of nations, as imaging that eternal City more or less adequately . . ." (Shideler 177). The city of London therefore carries within it an aspect of the divine, just as Beatrice is a Godbearer to Dante. The basic premise of the divine City is that no man is an island unto himself, completely self-sufficient. Citizenship in the City demands an awareness of mutual

derivation, an acceptance of co-inherence. To Williams, all that is good is whatever promotes exchange or whatever increases co-inherent relationships, and all that is evil is whatever obstructs exchange and co-inherent relationships (Shideler 62). One comes to exist in a city through an accident of birth or other happenstance, but one gains Citizenship in the City through choice. Once man chooses to live according to the principle of ordered exchange, he belongs to the City. To choose this is to choose Salvation. By refusing to choose this, by insisting on living by and for himself alone, a man chooses Damnation.

It can be argued that exchange is simply a normal way of life in any city, for existence in a city necessarily demands some level of exchange. Citizenship in the City, however, comes from choosing to make these exchanges, and from performing them with joy and full awareness of mutual benefit. Each citizen of the City has a function or functions to perform within it, so there is also joy in recognizing the specific benefits that are derived from individuals being who they are, and performing their functions in ways that no other person could (Shideler 180). Furthermore, each individual recognizes the authority held by others when performing their specific functions, and does not hesitate to claim and exercise authority when performing his own function (Shideler 181). It is the function that an individual serves which determines the level of his

authority in a given situation. A citizen cannot make his function serve his own desires for fame or power or pleasure. To do so is to be denied citizenship in the City; to do so is to opt for Damnation.

A third aspect of the City which is important to Williams is the redemption it offers to all its citizens. Any Christian city on earth also offers at least a possibility of redemption:

> That is, it is conceivable that a Christian state might recognize that the lives and deaths of its past victims do not merely extend into the present by the natural effect of past upon present, but that they continue to live in us and we in them. Therefore, we can determine whether their sufferings shall or shall not be made holy, as we accept or refuse their sacrifices, and as we accept or refuse the impact of the past evil and convert it into good. (Shideler 182)

This concept of a redeemed city is similar to Dante's representation of Rome, as outlined in an important book by Charles Davis, Dante and the Idea of Rome. Rome, in Dante's time, claimed a glorious pagan past, a past which had become Christian to the extent that it was the head of the Church and the capital of the Christian Empire. Dante draws upon a medieval tradition of venerating Rome's pagan past and fuses it with the view of Rome as head of the Empire and head of

the Church, transforming it into a harmonious image of a redeemed city:

> This harmony preserves the secular integrity of ancient Rome, leaving it its own merits, its own function, its own reason for being; but at the same time places it within the wider context of God's plan and Christ's revelation, recognizing that it has been transformed into the Christian city which is above all a symbol of man's salvation. . . . (Davis 37)

The Infamy stands opposed to the City in every respect. Its adherents live and perform their various functions for themselves alone. They fail to be grateful for their derivation from others of the past or present; they cannot see how their lives and functions affect or depend upon the lives and functions of others. They see a request for help as an annoying burden rather than as an opportunity for joy. Always, the damned find the responsibilities of citizenship in the City distasteful, for they refuse the doctrines of co-inherence, exchange, and substitution. Williams's damned characters are motivated by selfishness and egotism. They attempt to grasp at knowledge, power, or ecstasy without having earned these three through living humbly and in right relation with others (T. Howard 8). They try to make their function or vocation a vehicle for satisfying their own desires, rather than serving their vocation with honesty and

integrity. They even fail to see images correctly. They may refuse to see evidence of the divine in the things of this world, and end in idolatry or materialism. Or they may deny the very existence of worldly things, and end in gnosticism. Or, finally, they may identify the divine wholly with the image, which is pantheism (Shideler 27). Always, the damned suffer from these failures of intellect, for they deny the basic facts at the foundation of human existence, the principles of co-inherence and exchange. Anyone who refuses to accept facts through fear or mere dislike is condemned.

Williams sees a similar failure of intellect in the Fall of Man. Paradise was created and was wholly good. Individual difference existed because it made possible even more variety and therefore more complex patterns of relationship. If man was to be given the possibility of knowing the value of his own will and of God's will, then man had to be given the opportunity to choose between them. Thus God placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the gardens of Paradise. Man's choice changed his manner of knowing. All that was previously wholly good was now either good or evil, to Adam. What <u>was</u> had not in fact changed; it was merely perceived by Adam to be evil, at times. Adam's choice introduced dualism and antagonism into the world, and clear or unified knowledge became almost impossible. Disorder and confusion naturally spread

(Shideler 46-57).

Man was in need of redemption. This came, of course, in the figure of Christ:

> He would not only endure; he would renew; that is, accepting their act he would set up new relations with them on the basis of that act. In their victimization, and therefore in his, he proposed to effect an escape from that victimization. They had refused the co-inherence of the original creation, and had become (literally) incoherent in their suffering. He proposed to make those sufferings themselves co-inherent in him, and therefore to reintroduce them into the principle which was he. (Williams The Forgiveness of Sins 131-32)

God submitted to man's judgment of Him. He became man, embodying perfectly the principle of co-inherence, and exchanged His life for man's sins. Remembering that, for Williams, the good "consists of the energies and acts that promote exchange, and evil the energies and acts that obstruct exchange," Christ's act of redemption converted the energy of sin into that of holiness (Shideler 62). Furthermore, Christ's Resurrection knit back up the dualistic breach that Adam had created between life and death (Shideler 68). Christ was in Himself, then, the perfect image of God and the very demonstration of the

principles of co-inherence, exchange and substitution. The Christian Church reaffirms this regularly with the celebration of the Eucharist, where the body and blood of Christ are said to co-inhere in the bread and wine, and where the human celebrant participates in an exchange with divine Grace (Shideler 200-01).

Williams's unique interpretation of traditional Christian theology, containing the idea of how the divine interpenetrates with the ordinary, places his novels far from the mainstream of modern fiction. His penchant for seeing the supernatural in the natural creates some difficulties in the generic classification of his work. His novels may begin realistically enough, but sooner or later they violate the conventions of Realism. Two types of literature, the Fantastic and Magic Realism, deal with Realistic and supernatural elements in ways similar to how Williams deals with them in The Place of the Lion, Descent into Hell, and All Hallows' Eve.

A reader of a literary text does not come to that text with a blank mind, free of concept and discriminatory judgment (Culler 113-14). He will have read before, and, based on that reading, will have formed a set of standards by which he interprets a text. His standards may be validated or violated or simply altered by each new text he encounters, but, in every case, the standards are the vehicle by which the reader comes to understand the work of

literature. Certain well-established and widespread genres have been defined over time, developing relatively clear-cut sets of standards or conventions which are easily recognized by the reader and quickly assimilated into his own set of literary expectations. Other types of literature, however, violate the more usual literary conventions in many unique ways, leaving even the learned reader somewhat disoriented and disadvantaged when trying to interpret these texts. Attempts to clarify and codify these kinds of violations often have been confused and vague, and therefore of little practical use to the reader. The Fantastic and Magic Realism are two terms for perhaps the most confused attempts to codify particular types of violations of the conventions of Realistic literature. Clarification of the terms should help readers to recognize Fantastic and Magic Realist works, to understand the unique set of standards which distinguish such works, and thus to better understand the works themselves.

One confusion about the nature of The Fantastic arises because of the dictionary definition of the word fantastic. Merriam-Webster defines fantastic as "imaginary; unreal" ("Fantastic"), so is often related to any unreal element in a literary text. It is commonly applied to imaginary creatures like dragons or ghosts, or to impossible events like the arrival on earth of extra-terrestrials. As such, fantastic elements can be found in a wide variety of

literature, like heroic epics or romances. We must distinguish between such common fantastic elements of literature, and a separate type of literature called The Fantastic.

We must also distinguish between Fantasy and The Fantastic, two terms which are often confused, perhaps because of their linguistic similarity. Roger Caillois's French anthology of The Fantastic makes a more careful distinction between the two types of literature by referring to Fantasy as le féerique, and to The Fantastic as le fantastique (8). Alternative and synonymous terms for le féerique are la féerie, le conte de fées and le merveilleux (8). This genre is easily identifiable by even the most inexperienced reader. Its narratives are concerned with creating entirely imaginative worlds which do not, could not, and could never exist outside of the imaginative work (Delany 141; Russ 51-52). Irwin's The Game of the Impossible: A Rhetoric of Fantasy makes the same point: "a fantasy is a story based on and controlled by an overt violation of what is generally accepted as possibility . . ." (4). Fantasy's worlds are usually populated by wizards, dragons, dwarves, elves and other mythical and folkloric types: "La féerie est un récit situé dès le début dans l'univers fictif des enchanteurs et des

génies" (Caillois 11).[1] Tolkien's essay on the genre expands the population of le féerique somewhat:

> fairy-stories are not in normal English usage stories about fairies or elves, but stories about Fairy, that is Faërie, the realm or state in which fairies have their being. . . . Most good "fairy-stories" are about the aventures of men in the Perilous Realm or upon its shadowy marches. (42)

W. R. Irwin notes that Fantasy "is the narrative result of transforming the condition contrary to fact into 'fact' itself" (4). Magic, a "condition contrary to fact," is often a normal part of life in Faërie, and the appearance of a non-natural creature like a hobbit does not shock or frighten any other character in the story. Nor are the magic and the hobbit shocking to the reader, for he accepts that this world is far removed from his own, and is in fact impossible:

> Le conte de fées se passe dans un monde où l'enchantement va de soi et où la magie est la règle. Le surnaturel n'y est pas épouvantable, il n'y est même pas étonnant, puisqu'il constitue la substance même de l'univers, sa loi, son climat. Il ne viole aucune régularité; il fait partie de l'ordre des choses; il est l'ordre ou plutôt

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[1] Fantasy is a story situated from the beginning in the fictitious universe of enchanters and genies.

l'absence d'ordre des choses. (Caillois 8)[2]

> Les premiers mots de la première phrase sont déjà un avertissement: En ce temps-là ou Il y avait une fois . . . [sic] C'est pourquoi les fées et les ogres ne sauraient inquiéter personne. L'imagination les exile dans un monde lointain, fluide, étanche, sans rapport ni communication avec la réalité de chaque jour, où l'esprit n'accepte guère qu'ils puissent faire irruption. (Caillois 11)[3]

Other critics, like Tsvetan Todorov, in his important discussion of The Fantastic and its related genres, have noted that le merveilleux does not necessarily have to begin in a fictional world where the supernatural is "an integral part of reality" (trans. R. Howard 25). It often begins in a realistic or ordinary world, and its protagonists somehow move into the world of enchanters and genies, usually to

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[2] The fairy-tale takes place in a world where enchantment comes from itself and where magic is the rule. The supernatural is not appalling there, nor is it even astonishing, seeing that it is of the same substance as the universe, its law, its climate. It violates no regularity: it is part of the order of things; it is the order or rather the absence of the order of things.

[3] The first words of the first sentence are already a notification: In that time or Once upon a time . . . That is why the fairies and the ogres would not disturb anyone. The imagination exiles them to a far-off, fluid, self-contained world, without relation nor communication with everyday reality, where the mind can hardly accept that they could irrupt.

return to the ordinary world (Zgorzelski 298; Spencer 65). In this case the two worlds of the ordinary and the supernatural remain separate: "Le féerique est un univers merveilleux qui s'ajoute au monde réel sans lui porter atteinte ni en détruire la cohérence" (Caillois 8).[4] Ursula K. Le Guin, a popular writer of Fantasy, says the reason for the movement from the ordinary to the marvellous is that this genre is uniquely suited to describing the individual's journey toward self-knowledge and adulthood:

> It seems to me that Jung described, as the individual's imperative need and duty, that journey. . . . It also seems to me that most of the great works of fantasy are about that journey; and that fantasy is the medium best suited to a description of that journey, its perils and rewards. The events of a voyage into the unconscious are not describable in the language of rational daily life: only the symbolic language of the deeper psyche will fit them without trivializing them. ("The Child and the Shadow" 65)

This "symbolic language of the deeper psyche" uses archetypal figures drawn from myth, legend, and folklore (Le Guin "Science Fiction and Mrs. Brown" 107), thus explaining

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[4] Fantasy is a marvellous universe that adds itself to the real world without bringing any harm to it nor destroying its coherence.

the prevalence of such personalities in the land of Faërie. This theme of the individual's journey toward wholeness may also explain why these tales end happily, as noted by Caillois (9), although Tolkien describes perhaps a greater reason for the "happy ending," or "eucatastrophe":

> In its fairy-tale--or otherworld--setting, it is a sudden and miraculous grace; never to be counted on to recur. It does not deny the existence of dyscatastrophe, of sorrow and failure: the possibility of these is necessary to the joy of deliverance; it denies (in the face of much evidence, if you will) universal final defeat and in so far is evangelium, giving a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief. (81)

But whatever the First Cause or origins of these tales, whatever their raisons d'être, a novel from this immensely popular genre is readily recognized today as being "Fantasy" simply because it presents an impossible world filled with supernatural creatures and marvellous events.

Fantasy, which describes an impossible world, as does Tolkien's Lord of the Rings, is clearly different from The Fantastic, which describes a realistic human protagonist in a realistic world consonant with our own suddenly meeting a supernatural being or witnessing a paranormal event, as does the governess in The Turn of the Screw. The hero or heroine

is at least astonished and more usually terrified by the situation which he or she must view as impossible. The protagonist's world view is threatened and the harmony of a rational world is destroyed: "Le fantastique . . . manifeste un scandale, une déchirure, une irruption insolite, presque insupportable dans le monde réel (Caillois 8).[5]

The Fantastic is also different from those narratives in which the hero or heroine encounters frightening, strange, and abnormal events, but ultimately finds the events have a perfectly logical explanation. Todorov calls this type of literature le surnaturel expliqué or l'étrange (46), which is translated by Richard Howard as the uncanny (41). In the Uncanny, according to Todorov, the protagonist "s'agit d'une illusion des sens, d'un produit de l'imagination" (29),[6] and once the protagonist realizes this, the laws of the natural world are re-asserted as viable. Dreams, psychosis, and drug-induced hallucination also produce, of course, these sensual illusions and flights of imagination, so literature which explains its weird events as dream or hallucination also participates in the genre of the Uncanny.

Tolkien excludes dream narratives from the realm of

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[5] The Fantastic manifests a scandal, a laceration, an almost unbearable insubstantial irruption in the real world.

[6] the protagonist "is the victim of an illusion of the senses, of a product of the imagination" (R. Howard 25).

Faërie for similar reasons. The purpose of the fairy-story is, for him, to inspire a sense of wonder, so any tale which explains its events as illusory, as dream narratives ultimately do, takes the force of "truth" away from its marvels (45). The Fantastic is not so concerned with making its marvels wholly believable, but its marvels must have enough force behind them to raise serious doubts in its protagonists and readers about the validity of a completely and consistently rational world view.

The heroine or hero in the Uncanny world of illusions and dreams is merely temporarily disturbed and disoriented by what are only apparently strange events. But the hero in the Fantastic world remains disturbed by strange events, since they can never be explained in rational terms. Two worlds, that of the rational and that of the irrational or supernatural, have interpenetrated. Chanady, whose book examines various critical approaches to The Fantastic, sees this bidimensionality as the first essential characteristic of Fantastic literature (Magical Realism and the Fantastic: Resolved Versus Unresolved Antinomy 9).

Commonly, The Fantastic's supernatural forces are seen as horrific and demoniacal, constituting an attack upon this scientifically verifiable world (Caillois 23). A sense of horror on the part of narrator or other characters or reader is not essential to The Fantastic, however. Rabkin sees a signal of The Fantastic in a character's "astonishment" at

strange events (17). What is important, to Rabkin, is that "the perspectives enforced by the ground rules of the narrative world must be diametrically contradicted" (8). Chanady calls this contradiction of perspectives "antinomy," and feels that the natural and supernatural dimensions must be presented as antinomic in a text for that text to be considered Fantastic (Magical Realism and the Fantastic 14). Todorov focuses more on a reader's or a protagonist's "hesitation" than on horror or astonishment when he comes to define the Fantastic, but he, too, insists on the importance of the description of a logical contradiction between two world views:

> Dans un monde qui est bien le nôtre, celui qui nous connaissons, sans diables, sylphides, ni vampires, se produit un événement qui ne peut s'expliquer par les lois de ce même monde familier. Celui qui perçoit l'événement doit opter pour l'une des deux solutions possibles: ou bien il s'agit d'une illusion des sens, d'un produit de l'imagination et les lois du monde restent alors ce qu'elles sont, ou bien l'événement a véritablement eu lieu, il est partie intégrante de la réalité, mais alors cette réalité est régie par des lois inconnues de nous. . . . Le fantastique occupe le temps de cette incertitude; dès qu'on choisit l'une ou l'autre réponse, on

> quitte le fantastique pour entrer dans un genre voisin, l'étrange ou le merveilleux. Le fantastique, c'est l'hésitation éprouvée par un être qui ne connaît que les lois naturelles, face à un événement en apparence surnaturel. (29)[7]

In any event, a text which presents two mutually exclusive codes for interpreting an event is going to disturb its narrator, or other characters, or its readers. According to Todorov, the disturbance and disorientation is maintained throughout the Fantastic narrative, aided by the narrator's use of words denoting hesitation or uncertainty, such as seemed, perhaps, as if, or as though (trans. R. Howard 79-81). Chanady also notes the importance of what she calls "authorial reticence" in her definition of the Fantastic:

> One of the most important devices for ensuring the reader's participation is authorial reticence, which makes the inexplicable and mysterious even

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[7] In a world which is indeed our world, the one we know, a world without devils, sylphs, or vampires, there occurs an event which cannot be explained by the laws of this same familiar world. The person who experiences the event must opt for one of two possible solutions: either he is the victim of an illusion of the senses, of a product of the imagination--and laws of the world then remain what they are; or else the event has indeed taken place, it is an integral part of reality--but then this reality is controlled by laws unknown to us. . . . The fantastic occupies the duration of this uncertainty. Once we choose one answer or the other, we leave the fantastic for a neighbouring genre, the uncanny or the marvellous. The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event. (R. Howard 25)

> more disturbing. The narrator gives us only enough information to create suspense, but leaves the rest to our imagination. A logical antinomy loses its disconcerting effect, and is in fact destroyed, if it is explained. The fantastic is characterized precisely by the fact that the circumstances that are described cannot be integrated within a logical framework. (Magical Realism and the Fantastic 16)

For the purposes of this thesis, then, we can say that there are three main defining characteristics of the Fantastic. First, the Fantastic requires the presence of the two worlds of the natural and the supernatural in the single narrative world. Secondly, these two worlds must be presented and described as mutually exclusive, so that the presence of the supernatural is perceived as problematic. And, thirdly, the author must keep the reader focused on the contradictions of the narrative world and must refrain from explanation in order to preserve the peculiarly disturbing flavor of the Fantastic.

Magic Realism, like the Fantastic, juxtaposes the two codes of the natural and the supernatural, for it, too, combines supernatural events or beings with a largely realistic world. Seymour Menton, anthologist and critic of Spanish-American literature, has this view: "en literatura, el efecto mágico se logra mediante la yuxtaposición de

escenas y de detalles de gran realismo con situaciones completamente fantásticas" (El cuento hispanoamericano: Antología Crítico-Histórica 115).[8] Chanady sees this combination of natural and supernatural as the first defining characteristic of Magic Realism (Magical Realism and the Fantastic 21).

Floyd Merrell similarly sees that "magico-realist fiction stems, on a thematic level, from the conflict between two pictures of the world" (11). One picture is that of a modern, "enlightened" rationality, and the other is that of belief in the supernatural as a part of reality (Chanady Magical Realism and the Fantastic 21-22). Often this latter believing world view is identified by the critics with certain peasant or aboriginal cultures, and the author is concerned, in his Magic Realist story, to describe the other culture's perceptions of "reality": "Thus the juxtaposition of realism and fantasy, or mythos and logos, if you like, which characterizes magic realist fiction, mirrors the superimposition of European culture on the North and South American landscape" (Hancock "Magic or Realism: The Marvellous in Canadian Fiction" 34). It is not necessary to restrict the geography of Magic Realism, however. It can arise wherever the conventional scientific, empirical world view is interpenetrated by a world view

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[8] In literature, the effect of magic is attained through the juxtaposition of scenes and details of great realism combined with completely fantastic situations.

characterized by belief or faith in magical, mythical, or religious figures and events. As Chanady says, "Beliefs, which actually exist, are treated as objective reality . . ." (Magical Realism and the Fantastic 28).

So the subjective views of the author can also be a formative factor in a Magic Realist text. Carpentier, for example, felt it his duty as a writer to describe lo réal maravilloso, which is what he thought to be the actual presence of marvels and fantastic elements in South American physical reality (in Merrell 8). Merrell himself describes Magic Realism as "a synthesis between author subjectivity, collective conscious, and objective reality" (8). A Magic Realist, then, need not make any reference to a "particular cultural perspective" (Spindler 82). His supernatural or abnormal elements may be drawn instead from the world of archetype and dream, which, as Hancock points out, "contain aspects of the 'reality' we all share" ("Magic or Realism" 37), and therefore are aspects of what Merrell calls the "collective conscious." Spindler sees two types of Magic Realism here. One type is what he calls "Anthropological Magic Realism," where the narrator adopts a particular culture's myths and superstitions (80-82), and the other is "Ontological Magic Realism," where the narrator does not have recourse to particular myths and creates a more individualistic world view (82). Chanady, too, notices this difference: "Once supernatural motifs based on myth or

religion become too familiar, it is easy to explain a shift towards motifs created solely in the author's imagination" ("The Origins and Development of Magic Realism in Latin American Fiction" 56). Chanady feels that this use of the author's own motifs changes his or her works into those of the Marvellous; they cease to be Magic Realist texts (57). I, however, like Spindler, feel that such texts remain Magic Realist, since they treat a magical world view as objective fact, as part of reality.

Spindler mentions a third type of Magic Realism, called "Metaphysical Magic Realism." The main characteristic of this type is the presence of a defamiliarization of everyday reality, so that objective reality appears in a strange new light (79). To the Russian Formalists, defamiliarization is an essential characteristic, indeed the very purpose, of all literary language. It is a formative element and even a theme in the works of G. K. Chesterton. For example, his Father Brown detective story "The Invisible Man" is about a criminal disguising himself as a postman who utters threats and eventually commits murder without being noticed, since a postman is such a familiar figure to the potential witnesses that his entrance and exit from the crime scene go unnoticed. In Chesterton's <u>The Napoleon of Notting Hill</u>, it is noted, "Now there is a law written in the darkest Books of Life, and it is this: If you look at a thing nine

hundred and ninety-nine times, you are perfectly safe; if you look at it the thousandth time, you are in frightful danger of seeing it for the first time" (13). Chesterton also discusses how Dickens's vision could make the familiar suddenly appear strange and new, giving the example of Dickens's account of seeing the writing on a coffeeroom's window from the inside, making the word "mooreeffoc" and rendering the otherwise ordinary room entirely unusual and extraordinary (Charles Dickens: A Critical Study 47-48).

Such Magic Realism, which defamiliarizes, has been, perhaps, what has prompted South American literary critics Imbert (1) and Menton ("Jorge Luis Borges, Magic Realist" 412) to call Magic Realism a form of the Uncanny, or the strange. As Menton says, it "never deals with the supernatural," but simply presents the ordinary in a way that makes it appear wholly new and unfamiliar (412). Menton is, of course, describing the works of Jorge Luis Borges, a writer strongly influenced by the works and ideas of G. K. Chesterton.

This type of defamiliarizing Magic Realism may be influenced by German art critic Franz Roh's original coinage of the term Magischer Realismus. Roh applied the term solely to works of the visual arts characterized by "sharp lines and contours, and by the airless and static quality and eerie atmosphere of the scenes portrayed" (in Spindler 79). A well-known Magic Realist painting which displays

these characteristics is Canadian artist Alex Colville's Hound in the Field. Every blade of grass and every hair on the dog's back is so sharply depicted as to create an odd hyper-reality, and even though the beagle's body is obviously twisting and swerving, it seems unrooted to the ground and as if floating, giving it a peculiarly static quality. To Chanady, literature that depicts the ordinary as strange is not a type of Magic Realism at all, but is a form of the Uncanny (Magical Realism and the Fantastic 28). What is essential, to Chanady, is that the supernatural element co-exist with the natural, in a Magic Realist text.

Yet defamiliarization, or the depiction of the "real" as strange, is often present as well as the depiction of a magical world view as part of objective reality, as Magic Realist critics Wilson and Wheelock have noted (37-38; 7). Defamiliarization then becomes simply one possible characteristic of Magic Realism, not a defining characteristic. Russian Formalists would, of course, argue that defamiliarization is present in all works of literature, being a defining characteristic of literature itself, not a characteristic exclusive to certain literary genres. To Hancock, it is the "extremely clear light" of Magic Realism which defamiliarizes the ordinary, which gives us "a new and strange sense of reality, and hints, as Kroetsch says . . . 'of a deeper meaning'" (Kroetsch interview qtd. in "Magic Realism, or, the Future of Fiction"

4). Menton feels it is an attempt to grasp what is impossible for us to grasp--a sense of "absolute truth" ("Jorge Luis Borges" 416). Roh indeed felt that Magic Realist art "expressed the magical spirituality of the external world and the miracle of existence" (in Chanady "Origins and Development" 49). The presence of defamiliarization in order to depict the mystery of "reality" is simply another way of demonstrating an author's or narrator's individual, subjective view of the world, much like depicting Carpentier's réal maravilloso, and is in keeping with at least Merrell's description of Magic Realism as "a synthesis between author subjectivity, collective conscious, and objective reality" (8).

But whenever we encounter a metaphysical, magical, or even superstitious world view coinciding with a wholly rational world view consonant with our own, and treated as a part of objective reality within the world of the text, we are in the presence of Magic Realism. The supernatural or the impossible is not presented as problematic to character or readers. On the contrary, it is presented as if it were an accepted part of everyday reality, just as a flying carpet carrying waving children passes José Arcadio Buendìa's window in One Hundred Years of Solitude (32), without further comment by either narrator or characters. The antinomian vision of the Fantastic is therefore resolved and in fact abolished in Magic Realism.

The author's role in Magic Realism is to maintain this easy integration of the natural and the supernatural. His narrator neither judges the illogical as being illogical, nor does he show surprise when the impossible occurs (Chanady Magical Realism and the Fantastic 30). He does not attempt to explain the presence of the supernatural, but simply accepts it. Other characters do, too, so the narrator cannot be too easily dismissed by the reader as being unreliable. As Merrell puts it, "in magico-realist fiction the irreal is first 'invented,' then elevated to the category of verisimilitude" (12). Much care is taken to create a Realistic setting, or to show an educated and rational narrator, or to give a detailed description of characters and events that follows the conventions of Realistic writing: "Instead of having only a subjective reality, therefore, the unreal has an objective, ontological presence in the text" (Spindler 82).

Magic Realism has, like the Fantastic, three defining characteristics. First, the natural and the supernatural worlds are juxtaposed within the text. Secondly, the two world views are given an equal standing in the text, for both are accepted as parts of reality. Thirdly, the author holds himself reticent in order to give both world views an equal standing within the story, withholding all judgment and explanation for the presence of the supernatural.

The chapters which follow will examine, respectively,

Charles Williams's three novels, The Place of the Lion, Descent into Hell, and All Hallows' Eve, for their Fantastic and Magic Realist characteristics. Since both types of literature juxtapose natural and supernatural worlds, each chapter will begin with a discussion of how Williams creates both Realistic and supernatural worlds that are complete and coherent within themselves. He often adapts characteristics of Realism to create these worlds, so an examination of said characteristics is necessary before moving on to discussion of Williams's three novels.

Critics Harry Levin and René Wellek both look at Realism from an historical perspective. Realism came to prominence in the nineteenth century as a reaction to the idealism of Romanticism and Classicism (Levin 69, 72; Wellek 253-54). Its main objective was to reproduce, as exactly and completely as possible, the actual social world of the nineteenth century (Levin 72), "the orderly world of nineteenth-century science, a world of cause and effect, a world without miracle" (Wellek 241). Realism's criteria are, therefore, exactness and objectivity of description, depiction of the commonplace (Wellek 229), and "the suppression of any interference by the author" (Wellek 247).

Christine Brooke-Rose outlines eleven characteristics of Realism in her Rhetoric of the Unreal: Studies in Narrative and Structure, Especially of the Fantastic. She draws her ideas from, but does away with the redundancies

of, the French critic Hamon. The first is the "appeal to memory," where the text refers to its own past, through flashback or summary, for example, and to its own future, through such devices as flash-forwards or the future plans of a character. Brooke-Rose then notes that the "psychological motivation" of characters is a characteristic of Realism. Third is the use of "parallel stories," which attaches the narrative to a "megastory" that illuminates it, often accomplished by referring to names or events familiar in geography and history. The fourth device of Realism is "semiological compensation," or the use of such extra codes as genealogies or references to other art forms. Further, the author's knowledge about various subjects that are covered in his Realistic narrative is often provided by a "specialist character," since the author should be transparent and non-interfering. Realism is also achieved by "redundancy and foreseeability of content," where the character's daily activities and social world are described. "Demodalisation," or the detonalized and simply assertive discourse of the narrator, helps achieve the ideal of transparent writing. The hero is "defocalised," since he cannot be too heroic and still be realistic. Brooke-Rose gives an example of this defocalisation of the hero with a narrative in which one character performs the actions of the story, while another character carries its moral values. "Disambiguation" reduces the "being/seeming opposition," and

gives no false clues or mysteries, except those necessary in creating suspense. A "cyclothymic narrative rhythm," where an unfortunate event is followed by a more fortunate one, provides a sense of the real. And finally, Brooke-Rose mentions Realism's use of description, which is often extensive, and which renders its world "describable, and accessible to denomination," as is our scientifically verifiable world (86-89; 99-100).

I will begin each of the following chapters by examining how Williams creates his bi-dimensional narrative worlds with characteristics of Realistic literature. A discussion of other specific characteristics of The Fantastic and Magic Realism, as they are manifested in The Place of the Lion, Descent into Hell, and All Hallows' Eve, will follow. The Place of the Lion is largely Fantastic, but Descent into Hell exhibits fewer Fantastic characteristics, and, as its narrator says, shows little "contention between the presences of life and of death" (11). All Hallows' Eve is partially set in a purgatorial half-world, so when we see the Realistic world, it is seen through the veil of death, as it were, and is defamiliarized. This last novel also contains discussions of pictorial art which are reminiscent of the critics' discussions of Magic Realism. Of course, at the time Williams was writing his novels (1930-45), the term Magic Realism had not yet been applied to literature, so it cannot

be said that he intended his work to be Magic Realist. Neither could Williams have known how I have here defined The Fantastic and Magic Realism, so it must be remembered that I am discussing his works in my own terms, not his, terms which appear to be applicable to his bi-dimensional narrative worlds. Ultimately, it is precisely this unique combination of natural and supernatural worlds that have made Williams's novels so difficult for critics to categorize. Examination of the novels' Realistic, Fantastic, and Magic Realist elements should help the reader to better understand Williams's bright ambiguities of heaven.

Chapter 1 The Place of the Lion

The Place of the Lion seems to be a work of The Fantastic. It may begin, like Fantasy or Science Fiction, with an initial speculation, from which its plot is derived, but otherwise it exhibits all characteristics of The Fantastic. First, the novel firmly establishes a Realistic world, filled with ordinary and believable human characters. It does so by following many of the conventions of Realism. Supernatural elements are introduced gradually, however, and then some of the characteristics of Realism are turned to establishing the code of the supernatural. The two codes of the natural and the supernatural, existing simultaneously in the narrative, are then shown to be antinomic. The narrator continuously focusses the reader's attention on the unresolved antinomy by demonstrating his characters' emotional and intellectual difficulty in coping with and understanding the supernatural element, and by presenting the supernatural as a threat to the characters' world view. The narrator also emphasizes the antinomy by being reticent to explain the meaning of events. In all, then, The Place of the Lion is apparently a work of Fantastic fiction.

The Place of the Lion, like all novels by Charles Williams, derives its plot from one initial speculation. The method is similar to that of Science Fiction or Fantasy, which commonly use a "single premise" as "the most important

formative element of the work" (Kagarlitski 47). The Place of the Lion draws upon a long tradition of philosophic study on the nature of universal principles, starting with Plato's Ideas, then Aristotle's Forms and the Nous, then the Stoics' Logos, the Neoplatonists' hierarchical Ideas, and finally the early Christian Neoplatonists' concepts of hierarchy. An important Christian Neoplatonist, at least for our understanding of the intellectual background of The Place of the Lion, was Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, who described a hierarchy of Angels whose place in the hierarchy depended on how perfectly they emanated the beauty of God to the forms below them. Dionysius's Angels sometimes manifested themselves in the Forms of various animals (The Celestial Hierarchy 145-91).

This study of the nature of universal principles lies behind the events of The Place of the Lion. The novel's single premise is that the Angels, manifesting themselves as animals, and embodying Platonic Ideas of Strength and Beauty and so on, have broken through to the phenomenal world and are absorbing that world into themselves in a relentless motion towards idealized Form.

The force of the Angels, more often called the Angelicals in The Place of the Lion, is countered and balanced by the force of Adam. 'Adam is the Hebrew word for Man, so the Adam of the Bible is considered the archetype of Man (Peters). Adam, by virtue of his intelligence and

reason, is of a higher order than the rest of Creation. His original purpose is thus to be a steward of the Creation, naming it, ordering it, ruling it, and caring for it. Although Adam and therefore all of mankind fell from a state of perfect knowledge of perfect good, Man's purpose remains to attain, as nearly as possible, the original state of Adam. In The Place of the Lion, the archetype of Adam is gradually manifested in the character of Anthony Durrant. Anthony by degrees comes to understand the nature of the Angelicals, to understand his own nature and ultimate purpose, and is thus able to control both himself and the Angelicals, saving the world we all know from absorption into Platonic forms.

Because the hero of this novel ultimately accepts and understands the supernatural Angelicals, and is able to wield a supernatural power in order to save his world, it might seem that The Place of the Lion is a Magic Realist novel. Indeed, with respect to Anthony's character, the novel does exhibit Magic Realism's characteristic resolution of antinomy between natural and supernatural worlds. However, the amount of narrative time spent in establishing how the Angelicals are a threat to the lives and minds of its characters, in establishing how the presence of the supernatural has created a breach in the normal order of things, a breach which must be closed, is far greater than the amount of narrative time spent in discussing Anthony's

acceptance and wielding of supernatural power. Furthermore, any other characters who accept the supernatural are presented in a rather negative light, and even Anthony's heroic actions are presented in The Fantastic's characteristic terms of uncertainty, for his acts only seem to be occurring. Finally, once Anthony closes the breach and sends the Angelicals back to their own separate world, the purely natural and Realistic order of a narrative world which is like our own is completely reasserted, devoid of any supernatural element. Thus, although it displays some Magic Realist characteristics, The Place of the Lion is mainly a Fantastic novel. The remainder of this chapter discusses how this is so.

The Place of the Lion exhibits the interpenetration of natural and supernatural worlds that is an essential characteristic of Fantastic literature. It firmly establishes a framework of a Realistic world consonant with our own, peopled by Realistic human protagonists, and it does so by following the conventions of Realism. A discussion of how the novel exhibits these conventions is in order before discussing how a coherent code of the supernatural is established within this Realistic framework.

The Place of the Lion exhibits all of the characteristics of Realistic narratives as listed by Brooke-Rose, although four of these, the "cyclothymic narrative rhythm" (99), the use of "specialist characters" (99), the

presence of "parallel stories" (100), and the use of "semiological compensation" (100), are partially used in service of The Fantastic. Discussion of these four characteristics, therefore, is best left until considering how Williams establishes a supernatural code within his novel.

Realism is most in evidence at the beginning of the novel, where the writer of a Fantastic work would indeed be most concerned to establish a Realistic framework. The more firmly established Realism is, the more noticeable will be the antinomy between natural and supernatural when these Realistic human protagonists, operating within a Realistic world, suddenly meet a supernatural being, or witness a paranormal event.

Consequently, the first five pages of The Place of the Lion firmly establish the Realistic framework of this narrative. Even its first sentence, although it announces an unusual occurrence, is consistent with the conventions of Realistic discourse: "From the top of the bank, behind a sparse hedge of thorn, the lioness stared at the Hertfordshire road" (9). The bank, the hedge of thorn, and the road are all Realistic details which assure the reader that this world is, like our own, "describable and accessible to denomination" (Brooke-Rose 99). The setting is made definite by placing it in an actual location in England. Presumably, Williams's English readers would have

some personal knowledge of Hertfordshire, and would at least recognize that Williams's description is consonant with English rural roads they know. Furthermore, the sentence is in the past tense, the mark of the traditional Realistic novel, which Christine Brooke-Rose feels heightens believability (328), since it is the same tense used in factual reportage, giving it what Delany and Russ call naturalistic fiction's "subjunctivity" of "this could have happened" (141; 51).

That a lioness should be beside an English country road is, of course, unusual and improbable, but it is not impossible. The lioness could have escaped from a zoo or circus. The reader's enforced attempt at finding a logical explanation for this unusual event is validated two pages later when we discover that, " 'It [the lioness] got away from a damned wild beast show over there, close by Smetham' " (11). The concept of "this could have happened" has not been destroyed; the logical cause-and-effect laws of our world are operating. This quick explanation of the unusual is an example of what Brooke-Rose calls "disambiguation" (100). The early validation of the reader's use of reason implicitly encourages the reader to continue to use reason to explain events throughout the rest of the narrative. Furthermore, the narrator in the second sentence describes the actions of the lioness in such detail that the unusual is rendered as believable as possible. It

is brought within our ordinary experience, for what is described here are the readily observable actions of any cat: "She moved her head from side to side, then suddenly she became rigid as if she had scented prey or enemy; she crouched lower, her body trembling, her tail swishing, but she made no sound" (9).

The second paragraph introduces the reader to the first human character in the novel. The lioness becomes "rigid as if she had scented prey" and "Almost a mile away Quentin Sabot jumped from the gate . . ." (9). The simultaneity of the actions establishes Quentin as prey. This creation of suspense is still allowable in a Realistic novel, as long as the suspense is resolved swiftly.

We are next introduced to another character, Anthony Durrant, and are informed that Anthony and Quentin have been sitting on a gate and are waiting for a bus. The bus seems to be late, as Quentin checks his wrist-watch, so the two begin to walk in the direction they want to go, discussing various ideas, as intelligent and thoughtful friends are likely to do. These mundane details, like late buses and wrist-watches, are examples of what Brooke-Rose calls "redundancy and foreseeability of content," for they indicate the commonplace daily activities and social sphere in which these characters live (99).

Furthermore, these events are related by a third-person, non-participatory narrator, who avoids much

subjective intrusion, except for the occasional adverb attached to the "he said" of indirect discourse or to the actions of the characters. Subjective intrusion by the narrator is, of course, undesirable in Realistic stories, which strive "to achieve the realistic author's ideal of 'transparent' writing" (Brooke-Rose 88). In The Place of the Lion, the aforementioned adverbial intrusions do not carry the weight of the narrator's judgment of character, but remain neutral, seeming to serve the purpose of description rather than judgment. Anthony gets down from the gate "leisurely and yawned" and then he stretches "lazily" (9). What could be construed as a narrator's moralizing comments on his character is at least neutralized by Quentin asking a question "idly" (10). The two men are equated, here, an example of the "defocalisation of the hero" (Brooke-Rose 100). Besides, the reader is given a logical explanation for their idleness by the fact that they have already walked about twenty-three miles. Their present actions are simply the result of their past actions; we are reminded that cause-and-effect laws operate in this narrative world. Furthermore, the characters' understandable motivations are evidence of Realism's criteria of "truthful representation of the real world" (Wellek 228).

Anthony and Quentin encounter the unusual again when they see a number of lights moving along the road ahead.

Anthony posits a logical explanation, but rejects it on further factual observation: " 'They're moving about, so it can't be the road up or anything' " (10). The characters themselves are familiar with the rules of logic, and therefore affirm logic's place in this narrative world. They approach the lights and discover them to be lanterns carried by a group of armed men. Anthony and Quentin stare "in amazement," and find this event "very unusual" (10), which Todorov and Rabkin might consider to be indicators of The Fantastic, but once again the unusual is quickly and reasonably explained. The men are searching for an escaped lioness and have turned away the traffic. Thus, even the mundanely unusual event of the non-appearance of the two men's bus is explained. Realism's intolerance of mystery, termed "disambiguation" by Brooke-Rose (100), is in effect.

Realism's use of the psychological motivation of characters is also evident. Anthony and Quentin walk towards the main road and Anthony asks, " 'What would we do if we see it?' " Quentin firmly answers, " 'Bolt' " (12). Psychologists would find this, the "flight response," a perfectly natural response to a dangerous situation.

Anthony and Quentin walk on further and come near a house: " 'Hallo, here's a gate. I suppose this is one of the houses they were talking about' " (12). Anthony is referring to the lioness-hunters, who had explained that they had warned "the people in the houses" (11) of the

lioness. Here, the text is referring to its own past, an instance of "the appeal to memory" used in Realistic fiction in order to promote readability and coherence (Brooke-Rose 86). So, up to this point, we have most certainly been involved in a narrative world that is consonant with our own, where the rules of logic and of cause and effect operate, and we have met perfectly Realistic human characters, who do not seem remarkably heroic or even unusual in any respect. But the completely unusual and inexplicable is about to erupt.

So then, after noticing the house, Quentin and Anthony spot the lioness in the road and run for shelter to the front porch of the house. Much Realistic description of the house, its lawn, the moonlight, the road, and the actions of the lioness follows. An unknown man comes around the right side of the house, "pacing as if in a slow abstraction" (13), and unaware of the lioness's presence. The two men in the porch, paralyzed with fear, are "intensely aware" of this man who is described in great detail by the narrator, thus focussing the reader's attention on the man as well, and bringing the reader closer to his protagonists' concerns.

Another technique available to an author for bringing the reader close to his protagonists is that of free indirect discourse. Another critic, Kathleen Spencer, has written of Williams's use of free indirect speech in order

to ally himself to his characters. Up to this point in our narrative, the narrator's voice has moved fairly freely and unnoticeably between the more traditional direct discourse, that which uses "he said," and free indirect discourse. For example, the following conversation occurs when Anthony and Quentin are discussing the escaped lioness with the group of searchers, and Anthony asks,

> "Was it a large lioness? Or a fierce one?"
>
> "Fierce be damned," said another man, who possibly belonged to the show. (11)

The phrase, "who possibly belonged to the show," is the free indirect reflection of either Anthony or Quentin, the only two characters present who might be speculating as to the identity of the man. Through this use of free indirect discourse, the narrator has not only told us what is spoken, but also told us the thoughts of his character.

But Williams also uses the movement from direct to free indirect discourse to make value judgments about his characters, therefore violating Realism's convention of the transparent narrator. For example, as Anthony and Quentin are watching the lioness and this unknown, pacing man, the narratorial voice begins relating Anthony's thoughts with traditional direct discourse, then allies itself more closely to Anthony with free indirect discourse, and then withdraws into direct discourse, where the narrator makes judgmental comments about Quentin:

> Anthony thought to himself, "I ought to warn him," but somehow he could not; it would have seemed bad manners to break in on the concentrated silence of that figure. Quentin dared not; looking past the man, he saw the lioness and thought in hasty excuse, "If I make no noise at all she may keep quiet." (14)

Anthony's concern for another and his respect of the other's meditative state are implicitly valued more than Quentin's self-preserving fear. We are, for the first time, made aware of a qualitative difference between Anthony and Quentin. The hero is, in Brooke-Rose's terms, focalised, and it is our first real indication that we are leaving the realm of Realism.

Indeed, with the very next paragraph, the narrative decidedly leaves this realm, and moves into something entirely other, for the impossible occurs:

> At that moment a shout not very far away broke the silence, and at once the garden was disturbed by violent movement. The lioness as if startled made one leap over the gate, and her flying form seemed to collide with the man just as he also began to take another rhythmical step. Forms and shadows twisted and mingled for two or three seconds in the middle of the garden, a tearing human cry began and ceased as if choked into

> silence, a snarl broke out and died swiftly into similar stillness, and as if in answer to both sounds there came the roar of a lion--not very loud, but as if subdued by distance rather than by mildness. With that roar the shadows settled, the garden became clear. Anthony and Quentin saw before them the form of a man lying on the ground, and standing over him the shape of a full-grown and tremendous lion, its head flung back, its mouth open, its body quivering. (14)

The impossibility occurring here, is, of course, the transformation of a lioness into a lion.

Although the narrator of The Place of the Lion has effectively used the first five pages of this novel to establish the code of Realism, the narrator has also been using these pages to prepare us for the impossible apparition of the lion. This is in keeping with the demands of Fantastic fiction, where "The structure and style of the narrative must develop the code of the uncanny, the inexplicable and disturbing, before the reader can be affected by the description of the supernatural event" (Chanady Magical Realism and the Fantastic 61). Chanady feels that the Fantastic's most common way of introducing the supernatural is "the gradual insinuation of the unusual, the use of subtle foreboding, and the suggestion by the narrator that something extraordinary is going to happen"

(80).

The most obvious example of foreboding comes in the second and third sentences that establish Quentin as the prey of the lioness, as already discussed. Further hints that foretell the extraordinary action of the novel are subtly present. Anthony, in conversation with Quentin, mentions "the material world" (9), and in so particularizing, implies the existence of another world that is immaterial or supernatural. Similarly, Anthony says, " 'Mightn't it be a good thing if everyone had to draw a map of his own mind . . .' " (9). This reference to a concretization of thought foretells the kind of magic that Berringer, the unknown man attacked by the lioness, is engaged in. It is Berringer's concentration on the Platonic Idea of Strength that brings about the irruption of the Angelical of Strength, in the form of a lion, into the "real" world. On the tenth page, Anthony discusses how events are "very unusual," the two friends are "in amazement" at the strange sight of armed men, and Anthony is "surprised" at the information relayed by the group of searchers. Although Anthony's astonishment at the unusual is quickly resolved at this time, in keeping with the "disambiguation" required by Realism, the fact remains that such phrases expressing the characters' astonishment at events, help at least to create the foreboding mood of The Fantastic. Further subtle foreboding comes when Quentin

remembers an earlier conversation with Anthony in which Anthony stated that "ideas are more dangerous than material things" (12), foreshadowing the future events of the novel wherein Platonic Ideas indeed display their dangerousness.

A sense of foreboding becomes most evident in the narrator's description of events after Quentin's sighting of the lion. The eeriness or uncanniness of the atmosphere is most effectively created. The porch and the windows of the house are "dark" (13). The lawn is "lost in the shade of a row of trees which shut it off from the neighbouring field" (13). The men are isolated from potential help, and the lawn is "lost," as if the very ground of reality, by means of which they can usually measure and know their world, is utterly gone. To Rabkin, of course, The Fantastic occurs precisely when the usual rules composing the ground of reality are diametrically opposed.

Even the sense of sight, which also provides people with the ability to discern and know their world, is of no help to Anthony and Quentin, for they are unable to see clearly: "any movement under the trees was invisible" (13). They cannot see, and so do not know about, the movement which the narrator implies is happening under the trees. The unknown, the "uncanny," is given a literal presence, and it is also a threatening presence: "Anthony felt feverishly at the door behind him, but he found no latch or handle--this was something more than the ordinary cottage and was

consequently more hostile to strangers" (13). Anthony and Quentin would seem to be trapped between the two hostile elements of house and lioness. The narrator engages his readers in a questioning process at this time, and no answers are given until much later in the novel. How is this house more than ordinary, and why is it hostile? The unknown is made a fact, not just for Anthony and Quentin, but also for the reader. This delay in explanation, this insistence on the unknown, displays a tolerance of mystery completely foreign to Realism, which demands Brooke-Rose's "disambiguation" (100)

Even the man himself is unknown, and he seems barely discernable in the gloom, for he is described on his first appearance as a "figure," and later as "a man's form" (13). This lack of detailed description is another clear reversal of the criteria for Realism. Another violation of Realistic conventions occurs when the narrator intrudes by drawing attention to the strangeness of this scene, for he refers to "the strange pattern" that Anthony, Quentin, Berringer, and the lioness make on Berringer's lawn (14). These references to "form," "figure," and "pattern" are further subtle references to the subject matter of Platonic philosophy, but they mainly serve to create the eerie and uncanny atmosphere, the sense of "subtle foreboding," which Chanady feels is essential to prepare the reader for the extraordinary events of The Fantastic, the first of which,

in The Place of the Lion is, of course, the disappearance of the lioness and the sudden and inexplicable appearance of the lion.

The code of the uncanny is thus gradually insinuated in this novel, before it is clear that two worlds, that of the rational and that of the irrational or supernatural, have interpenetrated. The bidimensionality of The Place of the Lion is also emphasized by a narrative rhythm, which echoes the "cyclothymic narrative rhythm" of Realism. This narrative rhythm, however, flows not from fortunate to unfortunate events, but from natural to supernatural events. As we have seen, the novel begins naturally enough with two friends walking through the English countryside, but then they witness the sudden appearance of an unnaturally large lion. Similarly, the second chapter begins with the daily concerns of a woman who is working on a doctoral thesis, and ends with her experiencing an apparently sourceless smell, while, at the same time, another woman sees a huge, crowned serpent. Chapter Three also begins quite naturally, with a quarrel between one of the young men encountered in the first chapter, Anthony Durrant, and his fiancée, Damaris Tighe, who is the woman working on her thesis. Shortly afterwards, however, Anthony and Damaris's father witness a gigantic butterfly seemingly absorbing all of the more ordinary butterflies that live in the English countryside. This narrative rhythm between natural and supernatural

events becomes less even as the novel progresses, since the Angelicals gain in power. But once Anthony manifests the archetypal Adam and re-orders the world, the natural world that is consonant with our own is reasserted.

The Place of the Lion also makes use of Realism's "specialist characters" (Brooke-Rose 99), who provide the reader with information necessary to the understanding of the events in the novel. By using such characters, the narrator avoids having to inform the reader directly through the use of lecture or sermon, thus maintaining Realism's ideal of a transparent narrator. In a wholly Realistic novel based on events in the first World War, for example, we might learn about such events through the conversation of soldiers and officers. The Place of the Lion teaches us about The Way of Rejection of Images through the character of Richardson, about medieval angelology through Richardson and Mr. Foster, and about the history of Platonic Images through the character of Damaris Tighe. While these "specialist characters" manage to maintain Realism's ideal transparent narrator, their subjects of specialty, in fact, help to develop the "coherent code of the supernatural within a realistic framework" (Chanady Magical Realism and the Fantastic 65) that is the first defining characteristic of The Fantastic.

In relating Richardson's thoughts, the narrator effectively illustrates the method of thinking behind The

Way of Rejection, for Richardson has a habit of quoting Pseudo-Dionysius's words from The Mystical Theology:

> "He hath not power, nor is he [sic] power; He liveth not, nor is He life; neither is He of the things that are or are not, nor is there for Him any word of name or thought, for He is neither darkness nor light, neither error nor truth." (The Place of the Lion 140; The Mystical Theology 141)

Richardson lives at Bypath Villas, and it is significant that the only other word in the entire novel that has the prefix by is used by Anthony on the first page of The Place of the Lion. Anthony is there suggesting that everyone should draw a map of his own mind and trains of thought, with "all the lovely and abandoned by-lanes that he never went down, because the farms they led to were all empty" (9). Richardson's Way has been abandoned by Anthony, presumably because he finds it empty. Indeed, emptiness characterizes Richardson's Way, for the narrator describes him as "attempting always a return to an interior nothingness" (139).

Through Anthony's discussions with Richardson, The Way of Affirmation is contrasted with The Way of Rejection, so Anthony becomes, in part, a further "specialist character" whose specialty is The Way of the Affirmation of Images. Richardson asks, " 'Why should one act?' " and Anthony's shy

response is, " 'Other people, perhaps' " (122). Since he immediately leaves Richardson to save Damaris, becoming unequivocally the hero of the story, his Way is implicitly affirmed as being the more valuable of the two. His arguments against The Way of Rejection appear towards the end of the novel:

> "Myself, I think you're only wasting time on the images."
>
> "Well, who made the images?" Anthony asked. "You sound like a medieval monk commenting on marriage. Don't be so stuck-up over your old way, whatever it is. . . . I can't see but what the images have their place. Ex umbris perhaps, but the noon has to drive the shadows away naturally, hasn't it?" (194)

Anthony finds Richardson's an "old way," a Way that had its time in the past, but is less appropriate in the modern age. He affirms the value and the Source of images, affirms the noon-time light of consciousness and its purpose of illuminating the shadows of the unknown. Furthermore, he affirms the rightful place of natural laws and processes, signalling his belief in the value of reasserting a natural order in his world, instead of allowing it to be overwhelmed by supernatural forces.

Richardson is also a "specialist character" in that he provides Anthony, and therefore the reader, with information

about what his study group is studying. The group is run by a man named Berringer, who has loaned Richardson a book about medieval angelology. Anthony and Richardson read this book aloud to each other, thereby educating the reader. Richardson's summary of the knowledge gained from this medieval manuscript is perhaps clearer than the manuscript itself:

> "The idea seems to be that the energies of these orders [of angels] can exist in separation from the intelligence which is in them in heaven; and that if deliberately or accidentally you invoke the energy without the intelligence, you're likely eventually to be pretty considerably done for."
>
> "O!" said Anthony. "And the orders are the original Dionysian nine?"
>
> "Right, Richardson agreed. (91)

Mr. Foster, who is also a member of Berringer's study group, gives his interpretation of the nature of the Angelicals:

> this world is created, and all men and women are created, by the entrance of certain great principles into aboriginal matter. . . . And when That which is behind them intends to put a new soul into matter it disposes them as it will, and by a peculiar mingling of them a child is born.

> . . . In the animals they are less mingled, for there each is shown to us in his own becoming shape; those Powers are the archetypes of the beasts, and very much more. . . . Generally, matter is the separation between all these animals which we know and the powers beyond. But if one of those animals should be brought within the terrific influence of one particular idea--to call it that--very specifically felt through a man's intense concentration on it--the matter of the beast might be changed into the image of the idea, and this world, following that one, might all be drawn into that other world. (53)

Foster thus gives us much necessary information about the kind of magic that Berringer is involved in. And between Foster and Richardson, we are made aware of the threat the Angelicals bring to the natural world. As Foster puts it, " 'Are we to govern the principles of creation?' " (55). But our hero's reply to Foster indicates the ultimate "eucatastrophic" end of the novel: " 'If they are a part of me . . . perhaps I might [stand against them]. . . . perhaps the authority which is in me over me shall be in me over them' " (57).

The third "specialist character" in The Place of the Lion is Damaris Tighe, whose purpose it is, at least partly, to instruct the reader about the history of Ideas. Damaris

is writing a doctoral thesis on that very subject. We are hampered in learning much about it, however, largely because Damaris snobbishly feels the topic too difficult for ordinary people to understand. Of Plato, Damaris tells us only this, spoken while in conversation with her father: " 'Plato says that one should rise from the phenomenal to the abstract beauty, and thence to the absolute' " (26). Williams uses free indirect speech to relate a few more of Damaris's thoughts on the subject:

> her father on Plato was too silly. People needed a long intellectual training to understand Plato and the Good. He would probably think that the Good was the same thing as God--like a less educated monk of the Dark Ages. (26)

Later in the chapter, Damaris reads one of her papers to Berringer's study group, and the reader finds out a little more of the connection between Plato and the early Christians:

> "You will all know that in the Middle Ages there were supposed to be various classes of angels, who were given different names--to be exact . . . in descending order, seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominations, virtues, princes, powers, archangels, angels. Now these hierarchized celsitudes are but the last traces in a less philosophical age of the ideas which Plato taught his disciples existed in

> the spiritual world." (31)

Damaris's inconvenient attitude towards the common mind does not make her a particularly effective "specialist character."

She is, however, the vehicle for carrying the novel's "parallel story," or the "megastory" attached to this narrative in order to double and illuminate it (Brooke-Rose 100). Once again, we find a typical characteristic of Realism turned to the service of The Fantastic. In Realism, the "parallel story" refers to names and events that are familiar in history and geography, and are used in the narrative like a kind of shorthand to a vast body of information that would otherwise require a great deal of description to include (Brooke-Rose 100). In The Place of the Lion, the "parallel story" consists of references to the history of Platonic Ideas. These references can also be seen as examples of what Brooke-Rose calls "semiological compensation," or secondary cultural codes included to help explain the main cultural code of the text (99).

Even Damaris's name alludes to the history of Ideas, for it is the name of a woman converted to Christianity upon hearing the apostle Paul speak, at the same time that the Biblical Dionysius was so converted (Acts 17:34). This Dionysius the Areopagite was, of course, the attributed author of those Christian Neoplatonic works mentioned earlier, The Mystical Theology and The Celestial Hierarchy.

Damaris's doctoral thesis is entitled Pythagorean Influences on Abelard (19), both Pythagoras and Abelard having been concerned with the study of universals. Similarly, the title of the paper Damaris presents to Berringer's study group, "The Eidola and the Angeli" (24), refers to the connection between the Neoplatonic conception of angels and the Platonic concept of the eidolon.

The narrator briefly mentions Damaris's interest in a translation of Aristotle (19), and we are reminded of Aristotle's ideas on the nature of universals. To much the same effect, the narrator mentions Damaris's copies of books by Proclus and Iamblichus, both Neoplatonists. Some time afterwards, Damaris is thinking about "the relation of the Divine Perfection with creation" (98), and mentions an idea of Joyn the Scot, a Christian Neoplatonist:

> the account of the Creation in Genesis--
> "let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind"--referred, not to the making of the earthly animals, but to the formation of the kinds and orders in the Divine Mind before they took on visible and material shapes. (98)

We are thus informed of yet another connection between Greek Neoplatonism and early Christian Neoplatonism. Similarly, the narrator tells us that Damaris is creating a graph containing the names of those who, throughout history, have "identified Platonic ideas with the thoughts of the

Christian God" (127). These are Eusebius, Synesius, William of Occam, Albertus Magnus, and Abelard. Such allusions to the study of universal principles refer the reader of The Place of the Lion to a vast body of writings whose intellectual tradition lies behind the events of the novel.

The aforementioned William of Occam, of course, is best known as the founder of "nominalism," or the school of thought which considered words to be purely arbitrary symbols for the things the words signify. Platonists, on the other hand, thought there was a real connection between the word and the thing, or the signifier and the signified, as if the word partook of the same essence or "soul" of that which it signified. Magicians from all times have also believed this, feeling that if they could know the "true" name of a thing, that thing would be in their power (Frazer The Golden Bough 321-27). The allusion to William of Occam, then, provides some foreshadowing to the events at the end of The Place of the Lion, because Anthony, imaging the archetypal Adam, speaks a kind of ideal language when he is calling, naming, and directing the Angelicals back into their proper place:

> It was . . . not English, nor Latin, nor Greek. Hebrew it might have been or something older than Hebrew, some incantation whereby the prediluvian magicians had controlled contentions among spirits or the language in which our father Adam named the

beasts of the garden. (200-201)

So all of these allusions to the history of Platonic Ideas allow the narrator to illuminate his story without having to describe this "parallel story" in great detail. A typical characteristic of Realism is once again used to establish the code of the supernatural within a Realistic framework.

The first essential characteristic of The Fantastic is just this bidimensionality, where the two worlds of the natural and supernatural interpenetrate. Both codes, rational and irrational, must be fully established and fully coherent. Realistic characteristics in The Place of the Lion help create both coherent worlds.

The second essential characteristic of The Fantastic is a presentation of these two worlds as antinomic. Realistic human protagonists, who affirm the usefulness of reason to explain every mystery, suddenly encounter an event which cannot be explained, which they can only view as impossible. The protagonists are at least astonished and more usually terrified by this strange event, for they recognize that their rational world view is being threatened. As Rabkin puts it, the narrative's ground rules are being diametrically opposed (8). Todorov sees the protagonists of Fantastic narratives as being hesitant to decide whether they are merely hallucinating the event or are in fact witnessing something that operates by rules other than those of reason (25). The narrator keeps his readers focused on

the unresolved antinomy, on the contradictions of the narrative world, and refrains from much explanation for what, exactly, is happening. Todorov mentions the narrator's use of words denoting uncertainty and hesitation, such as seemed, perhaps, as if, and as though (trans R. Howard 80), in order to maintain his "authorial reticence" (Chanady Magical Realism and the Fantastic 16) and the disturbing flavour of The Fantastic. This reticence is the third defining characteristic of Fantastic narratives.

Signals of The Fantastic abound during the first seemingly impossible event of The Place of the Lion, when the lioness is transformed into a lion. Indefinite words and phrases are very much in evidence. "The lioness as if startled," leapt over a gate, "and her flying form seemed to collide with the man. Forms and shadows twisted," a cry "ceased as if choked into silence," a snarl broke out, and "as if in answer to both sounds," a lion roared, not loudly, "as if subdued by distance" (14, emphasis mine). Here, surely, is that "hesitation" of the narrator, or his "authorial reticence" to give an opinion about what is really happening. As has already been noted, the reader has already been given a hint that the ground rules of the narrative are shifting, for the lawn on which the lioness has appeared is "lost in the shade" (13). The two men who witness this remarkable scene, Anthony and Quentin, are as unwilling as is the narrator to commit to an explanation for

what is happening: "It was a lion such as the young men had never seen in any zoo or menagerie; it was gigantic and seemed to their dazed senses to be growing larger every moment" (14-15, emphasis mine). They cannot categorize this lion on the basis of their past experience, and perhaps they are suffering from some kind of delusion, perhaps they are "dazed."

The narrator keeps us focused on the antinomic nature of this supernatural event for quite some time. Anthony and Quentin continue to question the veracity of what they have seen. Immediately after the event, once the lion has wandered away, Quentin asks, " 'What in God's name has happened? Did you see . . . where's the . . . Anthony, what's happened?' " (15). Anthony responds with questions of his own: " 'But there was a lioness? What did you think you saw?' " (15). Quentin stammers, " 'I saw a lion,' " but he hardly can believe his own senses, for he immediately begins to argue with himself: " 'No, I didn't [see a lion]; I saw. . . . O my God, Anthony, let's get out of it. Let's take the risk and run' " (15). Quentin is exhibiting the characteristic terrified response to logical impossibilities that is common in Fantastic literature. The questions continue on the following page and Anthony and Quentin agree that they both saw a lion, and that neither of them saw where the lioness went (16). Anthony needs a further opinion on the subject, however, so he tentatively questions

one of the searchers for the lioness, who did not witness the apparition of the lion:

> "It was a lioness that got away, wasn't it? Not a lion?"
>
> The other looked at him suspiciously. "Of course it wasn't a lion. There's been no lion in these parts that I ever heard of, and only one lioness, and there won't be that much longer. Damned slinking brute! What d'ye mean--lion?"
>
> "No," said Anthony, "quite. Of course, if there wasn't a lion--I mean--O well, I mean there wasn't if there wasn't, was there?" (18).

And so Anthony thinks to himself a little later that "it couldn't have been a lion. Not unless there were two menageries and two--" (18). This possible but highly improbable rational explanation for what he has seen does not satisfy him, however, for the chapter ends with him insisting, " 'it <u>was</u> a lion' " (18).

Two chapters later, the reader's attention is once again focused on the impossibility of this event, for the narrator informs us that Anthony and Quentin have been discussing little else in the "past forty hours" (38). They agree that, normally, "lionesses didn't change into lions" (38); they assert the rules of reason, but these rules fail to provide them with explanations. They therefore begin to think that it was they themselves who were irrational at the

time: "Had they been under some sort of hypnotism?" (38). They are clearly exhibiting what Todorov calls "hesitation" between concluding that they were deluded or that they were indeed witnessing a paranormal event.

The next chapter again reverts to the subject of the lion. Quentin's terror is becoming more apparent. He seems "almost hysterical" to Anthony (46). But now Quentin is refusing to believe that he even saw a lion. He has many reasons to explain the impossible event:

> "aren't we making a rather absurd fuss over a mistake? We", his gesture included his friend, "were rather tired. And it was dark. Or almost dark. And we were--we were not frightened: I am not frightened: but we were startled. And the old man fell. And we did not see clearly." (51)

Quentin asserts the rules of reason only, refusing to believe in the impossible. As he puts it, " 'I don't believe in these things. There's London and us and the things we know' " (52). He has decided that he was the victim of a sensory illusion; he is no longer hesitating to decide what really happened. Anthony, on the other hand, is still hesitant, for he insists that he first saw a lioness and then a lion, even though he knows this is a logical impossibility. But Anthony feels that lying to himself about what he saw would be "like an insult to a geometrical pattern" (48). Quentin, as we may have noticed already, is

lying about not being frightened, and is refusing to acknowledge the fact of the lion: " 'I will see nothing of it, if I can help it. I won't, I tell you! And you can't make me' " (51). The narrator obviously values Anthony's precision and intellectual honesty more than Quentin's childish refusals. The hesitation of the protagonist of Fantastic narratives, which Todorov explained, is, in The Place of the Lion, presented as the only viable response to the narrative's events.

The narrator himself endorses this response. At the end of the second chapter, Damaris's speech to Berringer's study group is interrupted by the screams of Miss Wilmot, who claims to see a huge, crowned serpent in the room. Everyone leaves the room, so the narrator is left alone, and he characteristically refuses to be definite about what is in the room:

> The room lay empty and still in the electric light, unless indeed there passed across it then a dim form, which, heavy, long, and coiling, issued slowly through the open window into a silent world where for that moment nothing but the remote thunder was heard. (33, emphasis mine)

Further evidence of the antinomic relationship between the natural and supernatural worlds in The Place of the Lion lies in the fact that the reader is reminded throughout the novel that the strange events cannot be categorized by the

usual scientific or logical methods. Mr. Tighe, the expert on butterflies, cannot identify the great butterfly he has seen: " 'I've looked up all my books, and I can't find anything like it' " (26). Similarly, Berringer's state of collapse seems to defy logical explanation. Anthony " 'can't make it out; there's no wound and no bruise' " (15). The leader of the lioness hunters also attempts to find explanations for Berringer's state:
" 'It's very curious: his breathing's normal; his heart seems all right. Shock, I suppose' " (18). Even the doctor is none too specific about Berringer's state, for "he is inclined to diagnose some sort of brain trouble" (29), feels Berringer is " 'more or less in a state of unconsciousness' " (77), and later on confesses his ignorance in the matter: " 'It's almost impossible, so heavy, so impossible to move. I've never known a case quite like this' " (119).

Another curiosity in the novel elicits a great deal of comment from its characters. The village of Smetham is hearing a great deal of thunder, but is not seeing any lightning nor any rain. Damaris, who presents herself as an intellectual superior to all others, is so mystified by this thunder that she is driven to an irrational, folkloric explanation for it: " 'It must be summer thunder, if there is such a thing!' "(27). Dr. Rockbotham is equally mystified, and points to the insufficiency of scientific

reasoning to explain the thunder's occurrence: " 'Some kind of electical nucleus, I suppose, though why the discharge should be audible but not visible, I don't know' " (109). Mr. Foster, though he is not, of course, a very reliable character, believes the "thunder" to be the roaring of the lion (52). His explanation, though not specifically endorsed by the narrator, seems the most viable, for the thunder is definitely a part of the strange events related in The Place of the Lion. The narrator states that the snake passes through the window of Berringer's house "into a silent world where for that moment nothing but the remote thunder was heard" (33). Anthony notices that the thunder gets louder when closer to Berringer's home (109). Anthony, in fact, endorses Foster's view of the lion's roar, knowing it to be "the utterance of the guardian of the angelical world" (118). The "thunder" thus functions as a sort of leitmotiv of the supernatural in this novel, an audible image of foreboding. It is very reminiscent of T. S. Eliot's "dry sterile thunder without rain" in The Waste Land (342). The thunder in that work is an image of the modern world divorced from spirituality, much as the Angelicals of this novel are divorced from their heavenly Intelligence (91).

Another image of The Fantastic is that of the serpent. Rabkin mentions a common signal of The Fantastic being the recognition by the characters in the work of a reversal, or

a shift, in the ground rules of reality. In The Place of the Lion, the shifting ground of reality is literalized by the image of the snake:

> For across [the road], almost where it topped the rise and disappeared down the other side, there passed a continuous steady ripple. It seemed to be moving crosswise; wave after gentle wave followed each other from the fields on one side to the fields opposite; [Anthony and Quentin] could see the disturbed dust shaken off and up, and settling again only to be again disturbed. (64)

Quentin here recognizes that the normal, rational rules are no longer operating in the world: " 'The earth's mad, didn't you know? All mad underneath. It pretends to behave properly, like you and me, but really it's as mad as we are!' " (65). The shifting ground of reality, represented in this novel by the snake, becomes a growing threat to the perfectly ordinary mundane world, since it trips up the eminently practical and efficient Mrs. Rockbotham: " 'She declared the ground shifted under her. . . . she nearly fell on a lot of cabbages' " (109).

The threat to the ordinary world is made explicit by the narrator and the characters of the novel. Anthony says to Mr. Foster, of Foster's ideas on how the Angelicals are operating, " 'If you're at all right, it would mean destruction. . . . Cannot the breach be closed?' " (55). We

are reminded of Chanady's assertion that "The occurrence of the supernatural is often seen as a breach of the normal order of things" (Magical Realism and the Fantastic 5). The imagery of the breach is continued later in the novel when Anthony visits the unconscious Mr. Berringer, Berringer and his house being the source of the strange occurrences:

> he could not see the room very clearly; there seemed to be dark openings everywhere--the top of the jug on the wash stand, the mirror of the dressing-table, the black handle of the grey painted door, all these were holes in things, entrances and exits perhaps, like rabbit holes in a bank from which something might rapidly issue. (112)

These holes in, these breaches of, the normal order, represent a dangerous disorder to Anthony: "an intense apprehension of the danger in which many besides Quentin were grew within him, a danger brought about by the disorder which had been introduced" (189).

In a Fantastic work, the re-establishing of a harmonious order demands the expulsion of the dangerous supernatural element, and accordingly, the last chapter of The Place of the Lion witnesses the salvation of the normal, mundane world by Anthony. The scene is described in terms of re-ordering and of closure of the breach: "disordered beauty recognized everywhere again the sacred laws that

governed it. . . . His [Anthony's] just concern was still with the world of men and women, and with his gaze he bade the angelical [of the lion] pass back and close the breach" (204).

From the initial appearance of the lion, Anthony has proven himself to be the only character capable of reasserting the order of the narrative world which is consonant with our own. This is precisely because he is aware of the antinomic nature of the supernatural element which has been introduced into his world. And because he understands the threat to the natural order, and consistently affirms the value of the natural order, he is uniquely capable of re-establishing that order.

His leadership is subtly established in the first chapter, for when Anthony, Quentin, and the lioness hunters try to move the collapsed Berringer to the back door of Berringer's house, Anthony is the first to notice that something is wrong. The group of men initially has difficulty in even lifting the man, for he seems uncommonly heavy. But once they do, "when they had all moved they seemed to be where they were before," and Anthony's frustrated " 'O come <u>on</u>!' " gives the group the impetus they seem to need to successfully move Berringer (17). Anthony is the first to recognize facts, however strange those facts may be, and his knowledge thereof lends him the authority to command others, thereby allowing them to achieve their goal.

A few nights later, Anthony dreams of the lion. He is aware that the lion and its world are subject to different laws than is our, and Anthony's, world. He struggles to understand the rules and laws of the supernatural world that is threatening his own world:

> He ran much faster than the lion, but he couldn't get wherever it was so quickly, although of course the lion was farther away. But the farther away it was the bigger it was, according to the new rules of perspective, Anthony remembered himself seriously thinking. It had seemed extremely important to know the rules in that very muddled dream. (47)

The sixth chapter, entitled "Meditation of Mr. Anthony Durrant," describes the reasoning process by which Anthony attempts to understand what is happening, and what he should do about it. Far from completely accepting the supernatural code outlined by Mr. Foster as true, Anthony has much uncertainty. Why can he not see the snake? Why have the sheep not yet been absorbed? (70). Anthony is attempting to understand the workings of the Mystery through the application of reason. In doing so, he asserts the value of rationality over irrationality, seeing the use of reason as Man's rightful activity and province. Through his meditation, he learns that a wholehearted acceptance of "the new rules of perspective," or the laws by which the

introduced supernatural world operate, will mean destruction of what Quentin calls "London and us and the things we know." In other words, he is aware of the unresolved antinomy between natural and supernatural.

This is made explicit some time later, when Anthony is discussing ideas with Dr. Rockbotham. His words are highly reminiscent of Todorov's, when Todorov describes the state that the protagonist of The Fantastic is in (29):

> he [Anthony] was aware that he existed unhappily between two states of knowledge, between the world around him, the pleasant ordinary world in which one laughed at or discussed ideas, and a looming unseen world where ideas--or something, something living and terrible, passed on its own business, overthrowing minds, wrecking lives, and scattering destruction as it went. (110-11)

The antinomic nature of the supernatural element is brought to the reader's attention even at the end of The Place of the Lion, when Anthony heals the breach and sends the angelicals back to their own world. It is Damaris who witnesses this culminating scene, and the narrator maintains his characteristic authorial reticence in describing it, with the use of words denoting uncertainty and hesitation:

> But while she looked, the figure of Anthony came between her and the trees, if indeed it were still Anthony, and yet she knew it was. But he was

> different; he seemed gigantic in the uncertain light, and he was passing with huge strides down the glade. As he moved it seemed to her that he was wearing not clothes but skins, as in some old picture Adam might have fared forth from Paradise. (201, emphasis mine)

Then Anthony names the beasts, in an ancient and pure language, and in doing so is able to rule them, send them back, and close the breach. He has, like Adam, ordered Paradise, and, like Adam, once his work is done, he is barred from Paradise:

> [Damaris] saw [the lion] turn again and move away, and on the very instant the human figure itself turned and at full speed ran towards her. The earth shook under her; from the place of the trees there broke again the pillar of flame, as if between the sky and earth a fiery sword were shaken, itself "with dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms." The guard that protected earth was set again; the interposition of the Mercy veiled the destroying energies from the weakness of men. (205)

Anthony reasserts the old order of the postlapsarian world, a world not yet ready to be joined with the supernatural. So, although we have, for a time, an almost Magic Realist hero who understands the supernatural, and who can even

wield supernatural power, the unresolved antinomy between natural and supernatural is finally asserted as the only possible, just, and fitting pattern for the mind of modern man to know. Anthony may understand the supernatural world's rules and laws, as a Magic Realist character might, but it is a far more significant fact for the purpose of classifying this novel's genre that Anthony ultimately understands the supernatural to be antinomic to the natural order.

Thus, even though Todorov claims that no novel of The Fantastic has been written since the nineteenth-century (166), The Place of the Lion is clearly of this type of literature. It begins by firmly establishing, through the use of narrative patterns and techniques commonly found in Realistic novels, a narrative world like our own, operating under scientifically verifiable laws and thus knowable through reason. Ordinary human protagonists suddenly begin witnessing inexplicable events, and are terrified by the apparent threat to the natural order. The characters struggle to understand these events, their anxiety increasing as they realize that rational explanations are insufficient. The supernatural element is consistently presented as antinomic to the world the characters know. The narrator refuses to be definite about the exact nature of the events he is relating, therefore preserving his characters', and so his readers', disorientation. His

reticence is maintained throughout the novel. The Place of the Lion thus exhibits every possible characteristic of The Fantastic.

Chapter 2 Descent into Hell

Victor Gollancz, publisher of Charles Williams's first five novels, rejected his sixth, Descent into Hell. It was finally published in 1937 by T. S. Eliot at Faber and Faber. The reasons for its rejection are not known, but one familiar with Williams's novels can speculate that the rejection was due to Descent into Hell's being quite a departure from the previous novels. In those novels, the supernatural is presented as an invasive force threatening the established world order, but in Descent into Hell, the supernatural has become an integral part of the fictive "reality." As the narrator comments on one of its character's poetry, there is "no contention between the presences of life and of death" (11), so that past characters who have died have their own kind of "life" and co-exist with the characters of the present. A doppelgänger and a succubus are also among the novel's characters. These are not merely projections of troubled imaginations, for their existence is verified and validated by the novel's other characters. They are as much a part of the novel's "reality" as the scientifically verifiable world of telephones and trains. A man who has committed suicide lives in a purgatorial world which is described by the narrator without change in voice from that in which he describes what we would normally consider the "natural"

world. Furthermore, the narrator largely refrains from giving logical explanations as to why the strange events are occurring, thereby making the supernatural seem more ordinary, and thereby naturalizing the fantastic. Williams is attempting a new kind of fiction, here, and the result is closest to what has later been defined as the genre of Magic Realism, where natural and supernatural elements co-exist and are not antinomic, and where the narrator is reticent to explain the presence of the supernatural.

Amaryll Chanady asserts that "the primary difference between magical realism and pure fantasy" is the "presence of a realistic framework" (46). A number of realistic details firmly establish Descent into Hell as being set in the normal, recognizable world of England in the 1930's. As in The Place of the Lion, the characteristics of Realism, as outlined by Christine Brooke-Rose, are used to establish the code of Realism in Descent into Hell.

The "appeal to memory" (Brooke-Rose 99) is especially strong, mainly because making the past part of the fictive present is a thematic concern of the novel. Thus, there is much detail about the military history of Battle Hill, where the novel is set (9; 29-30). There is similar detail in describing the personal histories of its characters, Peter Stanhope (10-11), Lawrence Wentworth (11; 45-46), a man who commits suicide (32-40), and Pauline and Margaret Anstruther (69-71). Even the history of an ancestor of the Anstruthers

is given (73-74).

The description that is characteristic of Realism is not as exhaustive in Descent into Hell as it is in purely Realistic novels, but there is enough to indicate that the fictive world, like ours, is "describable, [and] accessible to denomination" (Brooke-Rose 89). Almost the whole of the first chapter describes the interactions and discussions between people at the original rehearsal of Stanhope's play, while making narratorial asides to give histories of Battle Hill, Peter Stanhope, and other residents of the Hill. This description does not violate any of the conventions of Realism, except perhaps that of the "transparent" narrator (Brooke-Rose 88).

The daily sphere of social activity, what Brooke-Rose calls "redundancy and foreseeability" in Realistic literature (87), in fact provides the surface plot of Descent into Hell. We are concerned, here, with the cultural milieu of Battle Hill, whose residents periodically group together to rehearse, and ultimately to perform, Peter Stanhope's most recent play. Movement from the rehearsals to the lives of the individuals participating in the play's production provides the novel's "narrative rhythm," another characteristic of Realism listed by Brooke-Rose (89).

Realism in the characters is also created by description of their daily spheres of activity, or by "redundancy and foreseeability." This is particularly

evident in the description of Lawrence Wentworth's life. He is an academic concerned with historical military tactics, so not only do we learn some of the history of military tactics, but we also become familiar with the particular views Wentworth argues about with other academics. The reader also learns about reviews of Wentworth's books, about letters he is writing, and about the weekly discussions on history and art theory that he holds at his home.

"Semiological compensation" (Brooke-Rose 100), or the use of references to other cultural codes within the text, is also used to develop the Realistic framework of Descent into Hell. Thus, Adela Hunt goes to see a play called The Second Pylon, reminiscent of Stephen Spender's actual poem, "The Pylon." Details like this, as well as Adela's disparaging remarks about Romanticism, establish her character as being thoroughly modern, one who could be a part of the actual world of England in the 1930's. Similarly, references to Foxe's Book of Martyrs help establish the verisimilitude of the history of the Anstruthers' ancestor, who was burned at the stake for Protestant heresy in the reign of Mary Tudor. Catherine Parry, producer of Stanhope's play, is also made more Realistic by her musing comparisons of Stanhope's play to Milton's Comus and Shakespeare's The Tempest. She is as easily familiar with dramatic works as would be an actual producer. In the same way, Stanhope's educated and literary

qualities, suitable for a playwright of national stature, are everywhere evident in his consistent quoting of Shakespeare and the Bible.

The "heroes" are more realistically "defocalised" (Brooke-Rose 88) in Descent into Hell than was Anthony in The Place of the Lion. No one character in this novel carries all the valued qualities of a hero as well as committing all the heroic acts. Instead, there are multiple protagonists, their individual contributions rendered more believable simply by being individual. Peter Stanhope is quite passive; indeed, it is one of his virtues that he is quietly available to help others rather than being busily and efficiently active. Margaret Anstruther is similarly passive. She actually does little except speak lovingly to people, and face her death with wisdom and serenity. Pauline, on the other hand, performs a number of "heroic" acts towards the end of the novel, although her personality has been, until then, deficient in many respects, filled with fear, anxiety, and confusion. In this way, Williams conforms to the practices of Realistic authors and avoids creating a hero of the Marvellous type (Brooke-Rose 88).

Perhaps the greatest technique available to authors of Realism for rendering believable characters is that of providing them with "psychological motivation" (Brooke-Rose 86). Characters who act in recognizable ways are, obviously, quite believable to readers. Characters are lent

even greater verisimilitude if their actions are motivated by their personalities, and if their personalities are describable and consistent. In Descent into Hell, we become most familiar with the motives of Lawrence Wentworth, whose personality exhibits all aspects of a narcissistic character disorder. So this character, the one who descends into Hell, is chillingly made the most Realistic character in the novel. Williams, writing in 1935, seems to have intuitively understood the late twentieth-century's psychoanalytic theories concerning Narcissism.

Nathan Schwartz-Salant's 1982 work, Narcissism and Character Transformation, sums up the existing literature about Narcissism, mostly written during the 1970's, and gives a helpful list of typical characteristics of the narcissistic person, along with a description of the narcissist's psyche, and both are accurate descriptions of Wentworth's character. For example, the narcissistic character is marked by extreme self-reference, so that whatever is said in conversation is immediately changed by the narcissist into a story or fantasy about himself (Schwartz-Salant 37-38). Accordingly, Pauline's hesitant conversation with Wentworth on the subject of doppelgängers (62-65) sends Wentworth into three separate self-indulgent reveries about Adela, and "Pauline felt the obstruction" (63) and ultimately stops talking. As Schwartz-Salant says, "One feels like a stimulus to a response which excludes

participation" (38).

A narcissistic character also rejects any interpretation of his psyche's content: "If the analyst attempts to expand the analysand's self-awareness by interpreting a family or life problem in the light of dreams or other psychic material, the interpretation may be . . . totally ignored or rejected . . ." (Schwartz-Salant 38). Wentworth accordingly refuses to attend to his dream of his descent of a rope into a black abyss. It annoys him slightly, but he does not see that the content of the dream reflects what is happening in his psyche. As such, the dream could serve as a warning to him, but because "It was a little dream, of no significance" (47) to Wentworth, its warning is ineffectual.

Similarly, narcissists cannot tolerate criticism, "for viewing himself relative to any psychic content other than his own grandiose . . . self-concept threatens his identity" (Schwartz-Salant 38). Only Aston Moffatt, another military historian, has the effrontery to criticize Wentworth's ideas, so Wentworth regards Moffatt as a personal threat: "he [Wentworth] was intensely awake to any other slights from any quarter. He looked sharply to see if there were more Moffatts in the world" (51).

This grandiose self-concept also does not allow narcissistic characters to admit to having any need for others, for needs would indicate weakness (Schwartz-Salant

39). So Wentworth refuses to admit his desire for Adela. He loses Adela to Hugh because of this; refusing awareness of desire, he is forced to refuse awareness of a rival for the object of desire:

> the incidents of the last Saturday had left him more acutely conscious at once of his need for Adela and of his need for flattery. He did not fully admit either; he rather defended himself mentally against Hugh's offensiveness than surrendered to his knowledge of his desire. Even so he refused to admit that he was engaged in a battle. . . . Rather like Pompey, he refused to take measures against the threat on the other side [sic] the Rubicon; he faintly admitted that there was a Rubicon, but certainly not that there might be a Caesar. (58)

The archetype of the "black magician" is that aspect of the narcissistic character's psyche which exhibits this grandiose self-concept (Schwartz-Salant 67). But because the grandiosity is, in itself, a lie, the "black magician" seeks further evidence for, or further reassurance of, his grandiosity. He finds it in the archetype of the "false bride," paired with the "black magician" within the narcissist's psyche (Schwartz-Salant 68). This is a negative anima figure, manifesting itself in the narcissistic personality in a dedication "toward

appearances, outer rather than inner beauty" (Schwartz-Salant 40). Wentworth's dedication to appearances is evident in how important his academic reputation and Adela's flattering attentions are to him. Schwartz-Salant also says that it is the internalized image of the "false bride" that results in the narcissistic character's continual thinking and fantasizing, and especially his doing of things to add to his sense of self-esteem (67). Wentworth proves himself a typical narcissist in his thoughts and fantasies, centering around his self-esteem, while he falls asleep:

> He made it a rule to think of pleasant things as he stretched himself in bed: his acquaintances sometimes, or the reviews--most of the reviews--of his last book, or his financial security, or his intentions about his immediate future work, or the permanent alterations he hoped he had caused in universal thought. . . . Also, deliciously, his fancies would widen and change, and Caesar would be drawing out cheques to pay his London Library subscriptions, or the Balearic slingers would be listening to him as he told them how they used to use their slings. . . . (48-49)

Another characteristic of the narcissistic character disorder mentioned by Schwartz-Salant is that narcissists lack a sense of history (39). A habit of lying in order to fit external reality into the internal pattern of

omnipotence is common, and so this habit distorts historical facts: "it is not what actually happens historically that is of importance . . . as much as how that event meets--or can be twisted into meeting--inner, grandiose pressure" (Schwartz-Salant 39). Wentworth, being a military historian, should be more familiar than most with historical facts, but "Their reality had not been quite so neat as the diagrams into which he abstracted and geometricized them" (29-30). In his arguments with Aston Moffatt, he responds like a typical narcissist:

> he was determined that Moffatt could not be right. He was beginning to twist the intention of the sentences in his authorities, preferring strange meanings and awkward constructions, adjusting evidence, manipulating words. In defence of his conclusion he was willing to cheat in the evidence. . . . (50-51)

A decisive event in his descent into Hell occurs when he lies that the Grand Duke's costumes in the play are correct, even though he knows they are historically inaccurate. If he had told the truth about the costumes, he would have had to make an effort to correct them, but he wants to remain at home with his lover. His selfishness and his lie decide his fate: "His future was secure, both proximate and ultimate" (199). Williams creates a very Realistic character in Lawrence Wentworth, then, for Wentworth's motives stem from

his narcissistic personality. A character whose acts grow out of his personality is a perfect demonstration of Realism's "world of cause and effect" (Wellek 241).

A coherent code of Realism is firmly established in Descent into Hell, then, but a similarly coherent code of the supernatural is also in evidence. A bidimensional narrative world such as this is, of course, a definitive characteristic of Magic Realist literature. Descent into Hell's main idea is that Battle Hill's long history of death has caused the place to possess the very energy of death, "an energy of separation and an energy of knowledge" (90). Death has the power to separate body and soul, and also the power to reveal the whole person to himself at the moment of death. These powers press on the inhabitants of Battle Hill because no longer, in this modern and anti-religious world, do rites and ceremonies sufficiently separate the dead from the living. Williams speculates that death's powers of separation and knowledge are now too close to us:

> what if the infection of their [the dead's] experience communicated itself across the too shallow grave? Men were beginning to know, they were being compelled to know; at last the living world was shaken by the millions of spirits who endured that further permanent revelation. Hysteria of self-knowledge, monotony of self-analysis, introspection spreading like disease,

> what was all this but the infection communicated over the unpurified borders of death? (91-92)

By the end of Descent into Hell, death has infected all the residents of Battle Hill, except for the Redeemed, with actual flu-like symptoms and hysteria, and Stanhope thinks "the plague will spread" (291).

Elsewhere, the narrator describes this illness as the "operation of the drugs of Lilith" (199), Lilith being both the wife and daughter of the Prince of Gomorrah (250). And Gomorrah, as Peter Stanhope knows, is a sterile city of self-absorption and illusion thoroughly infected by the dead's experience of separation and self-knowledge:

> don't you know how quiet the streets of Gomorrah are? haven't you seen the pools that everlastingly reflect the faces of those who walk with their own phantasms. . . . There's no distinction between lover and beloved; they beget themselves on their adoration of themselves, and they live and feed and starve on themselves, and by themselves too, for creation, as my predecessor said, is the mercy of God, and they won't have the facts of creation. (239-40)

The more one thinks of oneself, the less one thinks of others. The more one thinks of oneself, the more one encourages the illusion that one's self is a separate and wholly discrete thing, unrelated to anything else. The more

one is possessed by this illusion, the more one lives by and for one's self alone. Then one is indeed separated from the rest of humanity, and indeed from all Creation. The isolation encourages more introspection, and the introspection encourages more ego-fed illusions and daydreams. Death's "energy" of separation and self-knowledge, then, eventually leads one to deny "the facts of creation," being the facts of mutual derivation, of relatedness, of co-inherence and exchange.

Death's energy of separation is manifested in Lily Sammile and her double, the witch Lilith. Lily's pattering footsteps are heard all over Battle Hill, becoming an audible image of the supernatural's proximity to the living, much as the lion's roar becomes such an image in The Place of the Lion. She bustles to and fro, telling fortunes and whispering day-dreams of fully satisfied desires into the ears of the Hill's residents: "Everything lovely in you for a perpetual companion, so that you'd never be frightened or disappointed or ashamed any more. There are tales that can give you yourself completely and the world could never treat you so badly then . . ." (81). The language of Gomorrah is clearly spoken by Lily Sammile.

Her supernatural double, her spiritual self, as it were, is indeed the wife of the Prince of Gomorrah, called Lilith. The narrator of Descent into Hell has it that Lilith was the first bride of Adam in Eden (285). Adam

became vulnerable to her approach while, just like Narcissus, he was gazing at his reflection in a pool in the garden of Eden (in Shideler 129).[1] Eve was then created to save Adam from Lilith's illusions (Descent into Hell 285). But Lilith remains in the domain of Gomorrah, the Power behind all urges toward self-absorption and self-deception, and possessing the power to make illusions seem fact. As her "natural" self, as Lily, she puts it in this way: "I'll not only tell you a good fortune, I'll make you one" (81). It is she who makes Wentworth's "good fortune," for it is she who creates his succubus.

Wentworth is already well on his way in his descent into Hell by the time he finds his lover in the form of a succubus. He day-dreams so much about Adela that he withdraws from conversation with Pauline. But he refuses to admit his need for Adela, consequently losing her to Hugh. He so literally thinks so much of himself, that he finds Aston Moffatt's criticism of his scholarsahip intolerable, for "he identified scholarship with himself, and asserted himself under the disguise of a defence of scholarship" (50), rather than serving the principle of scholarship with accuracy and honesty. He therefore twists historical fact in order to make Moffatt appear incorrect. Even in falling asleep he betrays truth, for he creates wish-fulfillment

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[1] Shideler is referring to Williams's Heroes and Kings, published privately by London's Sylvan Press in 1930.

fantasies in order to comfort himself. He is already conversant with illusion and selfishness.

After one further act of selfishness, his choice to be jealous of Aston Moffatt's history award rather than congratulatory, Lilith sends him a succubus, a suitable companion for one already dedicated to illusion. Her very arrival in the form of Adela satisfies his illusion of omnipotence, that what he wants to exist will exist: "The thing he had known must happen had happened. She had come" (110). He is then provided many opportunities to realize the truth that this Adela is not the real one, but he finds it inconvenient to do so, for she encourages his sense of grandiosity and blinds him to his weaknesses: "He had hurt her--then he had not been hurt or she did not know it. He was wanted--then he need not trouble to want or to know he wanted" (175). Eventually, it is too much trouble to deal with the real world and correct errors in the historical costumes for Stanhope's play, because he would much rather stay at home with his succubus. Subsequently, his selfishness demands that he send away even his illusory lover, for "Even she was a betrayal, she was a thing outside [himself]" (274). In sending her away, he knows that he has reached the bottom of the rope he has been descending in his nightmares; he has some awareness of his state. He is given one last chance to choose truth, to dislike Aston Moffatt for his historical inaccuracies, but Wentworth hates Moffatt

in a way that is "personal and obscene" (295). His descent of the rope into Hell is complete.

The ghost of the suicide also finds himself in a world described in the same terms as the description of Gomorrah. For example, Mrs. Anstruther sees him "walking hurriedly on, a man strange to her, but after him followed a crowd of others, young men and children, and all of them with his face" (99). He is there, of course, because he killed himself, and suicide is ultimately a selfish act. But he is given another chance at life, because "The Republic . . . had betrayed him; all the nourishment that comes from friendship and common pain was as much forbidden to him as the poor nourishment of his body" (34). Pursued by the images of Gomorrah, then, he escapes by returning to life, for he would rather live "with friendship and common pain" than "walk with [his] own phantasms" (239).

Even Pauline, clearly a protagonist of Descent into Hell, is affected by the energy of Gomorrah, for death's "energy of separation" is manifested in her natural self and her spiritual self, which she calls her doppelgänger. This doppelgänger is Pauline's Spirit or soul, separated from her body. Pauline herself is thus a mere shell of a human being, all outward appearance of form, but empty because lacking the breath of Spirit. So outward appearance, at least in terms of conformity to collective social values, is of great concern to Pauline. She dutifully takes care of

her aging aunt, but without a felt connection to caring, as Mrs. Anstruther herself notices:

> Your elocution is very just and very effective, but a certain breath of the verse is lacking. No one could have been kinder to me than you have. We've done very well together--I as the patient and you as the keeper. That's what I mean by elocution. (75)

Pauline does not understand the true nature of her doppelgänger, so its existence naturally terrifies her. She is initially somewhat like the Angelicals in The Place of the Lion, in the sense that she is divorced from the Intelligence which is behind her. Her conscious personality is consequently confused and frightened. Her fear is added to by the fact that she carries the fear of an ancestor formerly burned at the stake, an instance of the "sins" of the fathers being visited upon the children, and an instance of death's "infection" of the living. She does not know that this fear is actually another's, so she finds a "cause" for it by creating a very threatening world view. Her intellectual inaccuracies, of perceiving threat where there is no threat, keep her from asking for help when she needs it, for she is too terrified to be perceived as vulnerable in such a threatening world. Her inability to ask for help, of course, further increases her isolation from humanity, further increases death's "energy of separation." Stanhope

rebukes Pauline for her attitude:

> If you want to disobey and refuse the laws that are common to us all, if you want to live in pride and division and anger, you can. But if you will be part of the rest of us, and live and laugh and be ashamed with us, then you must be content to be helped. You must give your burden up to someone else, and you must carry someone else's burden. (134)

So Pauline accepts Stanhope's help, allowing him to be afraid for her, allowing him to carry her fear. When she finds that she is no longer afraid, she is able to consciously carry the fear of her ancestor in return. She then recognizes that her doppelgänger is actually a glorious image of her spiritual Self, and she is able to join with it, or integrate it as a part of her new personality. By consciously serving the "laws" of exchange and substitution, Pauline is granted a new life as a citizen of the City which co-inheres with human civilization everywhere.

This City, of course, is the City of God, the precise opposite to the City of Gomorrah. The basic premise of this City is that no man is an island unto himself. Its citizens, like Stanhope and Mrs. Anstruther, know "the laws that are common to us all," and can teach these laws to others, like Pauline. Citizenship here demands an awareness of mutual derivation, an acceptance of co-inherence, and a

choice to live according to the principle of ordered exchange. Mutual derivation, relatedness, and exchange are fundamental "facts of creation," so acceptance of facts and intellectual accuracy are also required for citizenship in the City. The acceptance of all the facts of Creation, both positive and negative, past and present, we see especially in the "new" Pauline's "all facts are joyous" (283). She understands that if her "joy were seriously to live it must somehow be reconciled with the agony [of her ancestor] that had been" (203-04). She therefore lends her joy to her ancestor, who "cannot bear the fear of the fire" (232) that he is to be burned in, and carries his fear, so that when he is burned, he shouts in triumph, "I have seen the salvation of my God" (234). Pauline's act of exchange and substitution reveals another aspect of the City, the salvation and redemption it offers to all its citizens, and that the past continues to exist in some way. Pauline cannot understand how her ancestor died with her joy, before she had even the chance to offer it to him, and Mrs. Anstruther answers, "Why do you talk of <u>before</u>? If you give, you give to It, and what does It care about <u>before</u>?" (216). It seems the City is as illimitable and immeasurable as Pseudo-Dionysius's God is, for either no time exists there, or all time is one. All in all, then, the supernatural code of <u>Descent into Hell</u> is fully established and fully coherent, both the City of God and the City of

Gomorrah operating on a set of rules and laws that are at least as consistent as are natural laws.

The juxtaposition of natural and supernatural worlds within the same fictive text is, of course, the first defining characteristic of Magic Realism. The second such characteristic of the genre is that these two coherent codes are not presented as antinomic. The supernatural, the illogical, or the impossible are not necessarily threatening to the characters, as they must be in a Fantastic novel. They are instead presented as if they were an accepted part of everyday reality, without judgmental comment by either narrator or characters. The narrator's role in Magic Realism, then, is to present the supernatural as a normal part of the fictive reality, and therefore to "naturalize" the supernatural (Chanady Magical Realism and the Fantastic 149). The type of "authorial reticence" that accomplishes this end is the third and final characteristic of Magic Realism.

The narrator of a Magic Realist novel is "an educated and literary man who lives in an age which clearly distinguishes between reality and fantasy" (Chanady Magical Realism and the Fantastic 41). Descent into Hell's narrator is certainly educated and literary, for he often makes easy references to Shakespeare and other poets, and to the Bible. He also values an ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy, for he makes the following comment about

protagonist Margaret Anstruther: "But Margaret had, through a long life, practised the distinction, not only between experience and experience, but in each experience itself between dream and fact" (93). The protagonists consistently apprehend and accept facts; the anti-hero, Lawrence Wentworth, refuses facts and chooses illusion instead.

And yet this narrator who values a distinction "between dream and fact" has clearly adopted a world view that includes belief in the supernatural. This creates an ambiguity in the novel, for, as Chanady explains, "the learning which his style and narrative technique presuppose is contradictory to an archaic mentality" (41). The narrator resolves this particular ambiguity, in part, by commenting on those who would dismiss belief in the supernatural by calling it evidence of "an archaic mentality." He sees this type of judgment as erroneous. Lawrence Wentworth speaks the more common sensibility:

> The uneducated mind is generally known by its haste to see likeness where no likeness exists. It evaluates its emotions in terms of fortuitous circumstance. It objectifies its concerns through its imagination. (63-64)

And yet Wentworth, immediately after speaking these words, follows exactly, in his own thoughts, the process at which he has just sneered: "Wentworth wondered if Adela and [Hugh] Prescott had finished the supper they were not, of

course, having together. Their absence was a fortuitous circumstance" (64). The narrator's point seems to be that all human minds, not just "archaic" or "uneducated" minds, can and do work in the illogical way that Wentworth has described, and that we must accept this fact. Furthermore, Wentworth's illogical thoughts have apprehended the fictive "reality" that Adela is indeed together with Hugh. Williams is arguing that the illogical can arrive at truth.

The author of a Magic Realist novel successfully "creates a coherent world view, according to which events that are plausible by our standards of verisimilitude are considered to be on the same ontological level as those which are clearly perceived as supernatural" (Chanady Magical Realism and the Fantastic 41). Magic Realism commonly achieves this by describing the supernatural elements as fully as its natural elements, thus raising the supernatural to the same level of verisimilitude that the natural has. In Descent into Hell, for example, the physical description of Wentworth's succubus is detailed enough to be equally as plausible as is any description of the "real" characters in the novel:

> It was Adela in every point, every member and article: its hair, its round ears, its full face, its plump hands, its square nails, its pink palms, its gestures, its glances. (175)

Similarly, Pauline's doppelgänger is fully described (234),

and many pages of the novel are given to descriptions of the suicide and his activities in his "dead town." As Kathleen Spencer says in her essay about Williams's narrative technique, "The more specific and intimate the details of appearance and behavior given, the more convincing the fantastic occurrence will seem" (65).

Such supernatural occurrences are also made more convincing by having other characters, besides the ones directly involved, also see, and therefore validate, the presence of the supernatural figures. Margaret Anstruther, for example, sees Pauline's doppelgänger, although she has not been told about it. Both Margaret and Pauline see the ghost of the suicide. Adela is terrified by the sight of Wentworth's succubus. Since the existence of the supernatural characters is confirmed by other characters in Descent into Hell, they cannot be dismissed, by the reader, as mere figments of diseased imaginations.

Supernatural occurrences are also made more convincing in Magic Realist novels by the lack of narratorial judgment about the characters who encounter the supernatural (Chanady Magical Realism and the Fantastic 29). The narrator does not explain that they are mad or dreaming or hallucinating. Chanady sees this lack of judgment, what she calls "authorial reticence," as the third and final characteristic of Magic Realism (149). In Descent into Hell, the irrelevance of judgment about its characters' state of mind

is explicit. Peter Stanhope, for instance, makes the following comment about Pauline's doppelgänger:

> Had he been asked, at that moment, for his judgment, he would have answered that he believed sincerely that Pauline believed sincerely that she saw, but whether the sight was actual or not he could not tell. He would have admitted that it might be but a fantastic obsession of her brain. That made no difference to his action. If a man seems to himself to endure the horrors of shipwreck, though he walks on dry land and breathes clean air, the business of his friend is more likely to be to accept those horrors as he feels them, carrying the burden, than to explain that the burden cannot, as a matter of fact, exist. (138)

This lack of judgment by the narrator allows the reader of Descent into Hell to identify with the characters. This identification in turn leads to a greater reduction in the ambiguity created by this novel where a learned narrator tells of supernatural and irrational events. Because the reader identifies with the novel's characters, he or she "temporarily adopts their way of thinking, and conceptualizes the fictitious world according to their perspective" (Chanady Magical Realism and the Fantastic 42).

Williams also uses free indirect discourse to promote

the reader's identification with the characters. In this type of discourse the narrator hides behind the character's voice, retaining the character's speech patterns, but also allowing the narrator to comment on the character's words. As Kathleen Spencer has said, Williams uses free indirect discourse "to validate the character's response" (69), and implicitly allies himself with the character, rather than passing judgment on him or her. When supernatural events are reported through free indirect discourse, we thus have both the character's "word for it" and the narrator's "word for it." No other point of view, or no other opinion about, the veracity of the supernatural event is given, so the reader is forced to adopt the perspective of both narrator and characters, and to accept the supernatural. We must become like Peter Stanhope in his approach to Pauline's doppelgänger, and simply accept the presence of the supernatural in the fictitious world.

For an example of how the narrator uses free indirect discourse combined with direct discourse, let us look at the reader's first view of the doppelganger:

> Her heart sprang; there, a good way off--thanks to a merciful God--it was, materialized from nowhere in a moment. She knew it at once, however far, her own young figure, her own walk, her own dress and hat--had not her first sight of it been attracted so? changing, growing. . . . It was

> coming up at her pace--<u>doppelgänger</u>, <u>doppelgänger</u>: her control began to give . . . she didn't run, lest it should, nor did it. She reached her gate, slipped through, went up the path. If it should be running very fast up the road behind her now? She was biting back the scream and fumbling for her key. Quiet, quiet! "A terrible good." She got the key into the keyhole; she would not look back; would it click the gate or not? The door opened; and she was in, and the door banged behind her. She all but leant against it, only the <u>doppelgänger</u> might be leaning similarly on the other side. She went forward, her hand at her throat, up the stairs to her room. . . . (28)

The free indirect discourse is easily identified when Pauline questions the activities of the doppelganger, when she issues orders to herself, or when she remembers words and phrases heard in previous conversations. The direct discourse is found where there is a third person viewing Pauline and her actions, such as "she was in, and the door banged behind her." But there are passages which are not so easily identified, where the narrator's voice and Pauline's are perfectly blended: "there . . . it was, materialized from nowhere in a moment. She knew it at once. . . . It was coming up at her pace." Pauline's terrified realizations and the narrator's assertion of facts are identical, here,

resulting in the reader being compelled to accept this vision of a supernatural figure as experienced through Pauline (Spencer 71), or forcing the reader to "[conceptualize] the fictitious world according to [the character's] perspective" (Chanady Magical Realism and the Fantastic 42).

Furthermore, the novel is written in the past tense, thus lending journalism's factual reportage and the Realistic novel's "subjunctivity" of "this could have happened" (Delany 132; Russ 52) to the narration of impossible or strange events, and thus giving the event a greater verisimilitude.

But by far the greatest method of reducing the ambiguity present in a Magic Realist novel where natural and supernatural elements co-exist is by having the narrator consistently affirm the presence of the supernatural, and thus maintain a single and focused point of view. In a Fantastic novel, supernatural events are described in terms denoting uncertainty or speculation, like seems, perhaps, and as if. In The Place of the Lion, the narrator frequently uses such words when describing the supernatural. In Descent into Hell, on the other hand, the narrator may begin a description with such a term, but he immediately moves into simple assertion. He does just this when describing Battle Hill, for example:

But if the past still lives in its own present

> beside our present, then the momentary later inhabitants were surrounded by a greater universe. From other periods of its time other creatures could crawl out of death, and invisibly contemplate the houses and people of the rise. The amphibia of the past dwelt about, and sometimes crawled out on, the slope of this world, awaiting the hour when they should either retire to their own mists or more fully invade the place of the living. (31-32)

He begins with a speculation, using the word if, and draws a conclusion based on that speculation, which is expressed in assertive terms: "the momentary later inhabitants were surrounded by a greater universe." The next sentence uses the subjunctive and still speculative could, but the word could also, ambiguously, denotes actual ability. The third sentence fully asserts the presence and the nature of the supernatural, for now "The amphibia of the past dwelt about, and sometimes crawled out on, the slope of this world. . . ." The narrator continues to give information about the supernatural world throughout the novel. Indeed, the only witness to the activities of the ghost of the suicide for most of the novel is the narrator, and when the narrator asserts, "The dead man walked in his dead town" (154), in exactly the same voice that he says "Pauline sat back in her chair" (123), the reader has no choice but to

accept these equally valid statements of textual fact. Both are absolutely normal and understandable. So the reader perceives that the supernatural element is not necessarily problematic, and simply accepts its presence in the fictitious world.

There is, however, some problem with the power of Gomorrah. This is not because it is a supernatural power, but because it is opposed to the principles of mutual derivation, relatedness, and exchange. In essence, its power is that of evil, seeking always, with its energies of separation and selfishness, to divide the Kingdom of God. It images wrong relationship to the supernatural rather than right relationship. So it is certainly antinomic to the harmony that can potentially exist between natural and supernatural. This harmony is consistently asserted by narrator and characters to be possible, and even actual, so Descent into Hell remains largely Magic Realist in character, in spite of its antinomies.

Williams uses a number of techniques, then, to present the supernatural so that it is not antinomic with the natural, or Realistic code, of Descent into Hell. His narrator is reticent to pass judgment on the characters who witness the supernatural events, other characters validate the supernatural experiences, free indirect discourse allies the narrator to the characters' thoughts and experiences, and the narrator consistently maintains a point of view that

affirms and understands the supernatural code. Every available method of establishing verisimilitude is used in this novel which ambiguously deals with the verifiable world of England in the 1930's and with a co-existent supernatural world. As such, Descent into Hell fulfills all three characteristics of the genre of Magic Realism.

Chapter 3 All Hallows' Eve

All Hallows' Eve appears to be a Magic Realist novel, although the term Magic Realism had not been applied to literature at the time Williams was writing his novels. All Hallows' Eve juxtaposes the natural world of London shortly after WWII's bombing has stopped, and a supernatural realm of Purgatory. There is resolved antinomy between the two worlds, and the narrator refuses to pass rational judgment on those characters who witness supernatural events. The purgatorial world is carefully rendered to be as credible as possible by opening the novel directly into the supernatural realm and introducing the reader to a character uniquely suited to interpreting Purgatory. A number of characteristics borrowed from Realistic writing, the wholehearted acceptance of the supernatural by the narrator, and the explication of the coherent system of laws by which the world operates, also help to raise the level of verisimilitude of the supernatural realm. The natural realm, on the other hand, is quickly and easily created simply by the use of Realism's characteristics. Even the characters who inhabit this natural realm, however, accept the supernatural's presence, and most affirm a positive relationship between the two worlds. The main antagonist wishes to disrupt this relationship, and his disruption supplies the only instance of unresolved antinomy in this

Magic Realist novel. The narrator further emphasizes characteristics reminiscent of Magic Realism in All Hallows' Eve by including discussions of two paintings described in ways similar to critics' descriptions of Magic Realism. These paintings respectively image the entire work's demonstration of right relationship and wrong relationship between natural and supernatural.

Unlike Williams's other novels, All Hallows' Eve opens in a supernatural world. The reader's introduction to the entire fictive world is thus an introduction to a purgatorial London. What better way to convince a modern and supposedly rational reader of the immediacy of a supernatural world than by plunging him or her immediately into that world? Furthermore, if what we learn first about a subject tends to be remembered longest, as the psychologists of learning tell us, then this initial representation of Purgatory remains the most vivid impression readers will have of the entire novel, and this very vividness enhances credibility.

The first character encountered in a novel will also partake of this vividness that can enhance credibility. The reader of All Hallows' Eve is introduced, in the first sentence, to Lester Furnival. Lester is dead, and is therefore a supernatural being. As such a being, she is alien to the reader's experience. But a Magic Realist writer's purpose is to make the strange as ordinary as

possible, to naturalize the fantastic, to bring the supernatural as close as possible to the reader's experience. So the narrator needs to give Lester more than the vividness she is already given by being the first possible character available for reader-identification.

He solves the problem by making Lester a modern, rational woman who has only recently died, who does not even know she has died until several pages into the first chapter, and whose thoughts, acts, and feelings therefore remain those of a modern, rational woman. She only gradually comes to understand the true nature of her state, the true nature of the world around her, and the ways in which this world operates. She continues to interpret what she sees and does as a modern woman would. As the narrator puts it, "Lester was finding out but slowly the capacities of her present existence, and even those she understood after her old manner" (117). That is, as she learns about her supernatural existence, she explains it to herself in terms that she can understand, and that therefore we modern readers can understand. So Lester is an excellent mediator, not only between the natural and supernatural, but also between the fictive world and the reader's world. She is forced to begin her new "life" as the reader is forced to begin this novel, in a strange place that none of us understands. She is the reader's guide to "reading" her world. Lester's experience is precisely the reader's.

Narrative technique reinforces this closeness between the reader and Lester. Williams, as he does in all his novels, creates a largely impersonal and non-participatory narrator who merely records events and what the characters see, think, and feel. Apart from two short narratorial intrusions, the first chapter is told through Lester's perceptions. The reader can only know this fictive world as Lester knows it, as no other point of view is provided from which the reader might be allowed to judge the truthfulness of Lester's observations. That kind of distance from the character, which allows the reader to judge, is common in the Fantastic, but not in Magic Realism.

The narrative voice even recedes behind Lester's, from time to time, by the narrator's use of free, indirect discourse, a method of discourse common to both Realism and Magic Realism, and present in all of Williams's novels. Brooke-Rose describes free indirect discourse in Realism:

> It is a mixed discourse, also for the effect of the real (what the character is thinking, in his own words), but also typical of the inherent contradictions of realism (the effacement of the narrator, nevertheless inescapably there, in the tenses and the pronoun). (94-95)

Brooke-Rose elsewhere calls this "effacement of the narrator," "demodalisation" (100), a defining characteristic of Realism. Since narratorial voice and character's voice

are so closely allied in this type of discourse, they reinforce each other's point of view, so the possibility of the reader judging the truth of their observations becomes a less valid reading strategy.

The narrator reports Lester's perceptions in the past tense. The past tense is the same used in the factual reportage of journalism and in the traditional Realistic novel. Thus, it implicitly echoes what Delany and Russ call journalism's "subjunctivity" of "this happened," and Realism's "subjunctivity" of "this could have happened" (141; 51-52). The use of the past tense in All Hallows' Eve and in Williams's other novels is appropriate to his purpose of lending credibility to his fictional worlds.

Further characteristics of Realism abound in the narrator's portrayal of the supernatural world of Purgatory. The most outstanding characteristic of Realism is detailed description, and the opening paragraph's concrete details successfully re-create the scene in the reader's mind, or re-present "the real within the fiction," as Brooke-Rose puts it (99):

> It was twilight, but the City was no longer dark. The street lamps along the Embankment were still dimmed, but in the buildings shutters and blinds and curtains had been removed or left undrawn, and the lights were coming out there like the first faint stars above. Those lights were the peace. (1)

As in Realism, the description slows down the narrative, a slowness appropriate here because it echoes the sense of quietness and peace the passage evokes.

So the novel opens with Lester standing on Westminster Bridge, observing the River Thames and the lights along the Embankment. The second page similarly has Lester observing the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey. These familiar place names render Lester's world familiar to the reader. Brooke-Rose calls this the use of "the parallel story" of geography, which ensures the "effect of [the] real while allowing economy of description" (100). Similarly, the parallel story of history is also evident, as the first and second paragraphs enter into Lester's musings on the nature of the peace in London after the end of the bombing in the Second World War. We also read that, during the war, Lester made bandages for the Red Cross. This little detail about the fictive past of the character also lends credibility and is called "the appeal to memory" by Brooke-Rose (99).

Lester's memories are often also examples of another characteristic of Realism, "redundancy," or "description of the character's social sphere and daily activities" (Brooke-Rose 87). The memories of how she argued with her husband, Richard, and of how her "friendship" with Evelyn was a "habit" based on boredom "with which she filled spare hours" (15), and on convenience "because it suited them" (16), are

not only examples of realistic "redundancy," but also telling characterizations which lend psychological realism to Lester. Realism always demands a believable "psychological motivation" in its characters (Brooke-Rose 100), where the characters' actions are motivated by the kinds of personalities they exhibit. This is certainly present in the following description of the relationship between Lester and Evelyn:

> Evelyn usually did what Lester wanted. She would talk gossip which Lester did not quite like to talk, but did rather like to hear talked, because she could then listen to it while despising it. She kept Lester up to date in all her less decent curiosities. (15-16)

But besides using characteristics borrowed from the Realistic tradition in literature to make the supernatural world more accessible to the modern, disbelieving reader, the narrator also engages the reader imaginatively in this fictive world by inverting one characteristic of the more familiar world in his portrayal of Purgatory. London is full of people and the noises people make, but purgatorial London is silent and empty. Characteristics merely opposite to those readers know are readily imagined.

Mention of these differences between the two worlds become signals to Lester, and so also to the reader, that the London they are experiencing is not quite the London

they are familiar with. Chanady has noted that the supernatural in Magic Realism "is usually introduced casually into the narrative" (Magical Realism and the Fantastic 45). The narrator of All Hallows' Eve achieves this casualness by gradually noting differences and by focusing more and more on these differences as the narrative progresses. But it will be remembered that a textual focus on what is strange is a characteristic of the Fantastic, rather than of Magic Realism. So this focus on the differences between the worlds of Lester's past and of Lester's present bears further examination.

Lester's new supernatural life begins as quietly and ordinarily as any day in London might. It is indeed the new London's very quietness that begins to signal difference to Lester:

> it occured [sic] to her that the silence was very prolonged, except for that recurrent solitary plane. No one, all the time she had been standing there, had crossed the bridge; no voice, no step, no car had sounded in the deepening night. (2)

The reader might speculate on reasons for the strange quietness, at this point, but will delay giving him- or herself any definitive answers until the text provides more information. Lester herself speculates that "In all that City she might have been the only living thing" (2), but its illogic will incline the reader to dismiss it, even though,

of course, her illogic has brought her closer to the textual truth than would any logical explanation a reader might formulate.

The third paragraph moves on to more oddities. Lester's memories are confused and uncertain. She cannot remember how she came to be on Westminster Bridge: "she was either going to or coming from her own flat" (2). Furthermore, she cannot remember exactly when she was married to Richard. As she herself puts it, "It was all mixed up with that [airplane] crash which had put everything out of her head" (2). At this point, the reader might feel satisfied that he or she has found a sound reason for Lester's strange perceptions and confused memories. She is probably suffering from amnesia, due to a blow to her head from an airplane accident in the middle of London. There are no further textual clues to help corroborate or deny the validity of such an interpretation, however.

The fourth paragraph returns to the subject of the odd quietness of London:

> She knew the sudden London lulls well enough, but this lull was lasting absurdly long. All the lulls she had ever known were not as deep as this, in which there seemed no movement at all. . . . She was alone with this night in the City--a night of peace and lights and stars, and of bridges and streets she knew, but all in a silence she did not

> know, so that if she yielded to the silence she would not know those other things, and the whole place would be different and dreadful. (3)

As will be noted, the above focuses more directly on the apparent differences of this London, on its unknown aspects. The ground rules of reality have shifted, and it is beginning to frighten Lester. Definitive signals of the Fantastic have entered the text.

The silence and the lack of people in this strange London prompt Lester to "desire to see someone" (4), and then she hears Richard's footsteps approaching her. Eventually they come face to face, and the meeting frightens Lester, "for he seemed almost to float before her in the air and to be far away" (5). The use of the word <u>seemed</u> is, of course, common to The Fantastic. The tone of The Fantastic continues:

> She was almost up to him and she saw him throw up his hands towards her. She caught them; she knew she caught them, for she could see them in her own, but she could not feel them. They were terrifying and he was terrifying. She brought her hands against her breast and they grew fixed there, as, wide-eyed with anger and fear, she watched him disappearing before her. As if he were a ghost he faded; and with him faded all the pleasant human sounds--feet, voices, bells,

> engines, wheels--which now she knew that, while she had talked to him, she had again clearly heard. (5)

The contravention of natural laws, Lester's terror, and the words as if are all, again, signals of the Fantastic. The irony here is, of course, that what has penetrated into Lester's world is not some creature of a supernatural world, but an intimately familiar person from the "real" world. It is not Lester who is witnessing the supernatural event, but Richard. To Lester and the reader, then, this world of Purgatory seems more "real" than the natural world. The narrator's use of Fantastic signals when introducing us to Richard defamiliarizes the natural world. One could say, in this case, that the narrator fantasticizes the natural in order to naturalize the fantastic.

The tone of The Fantastic is not maintained for long, however. Lester does try to explain what she has just seen, just as a character in the Fantastic would, but she does not search for rational explanations like "I must be dreaming or hallucinating." Instead, she turns immediately to a supernatural explanation. Richard must be dead, and she has seen his ghost:

> Dead; separate; forever separate. It did not, in that separation, much matter who was dead. If it had been she--
>
> She. On the instant she knew it. The word

> still meant to her so much only this separation that the knowledge did not at first surprise her. One of them was; she was. Very well; she was. . . . She did not now doubt the fact and was still not surprised. (6-7)

The above passage ceases to signal The Fantastic. Instead of finding a rational explanation for what is happening, Lester finds an answer in the irrational. The supernatural does not surprise her, as it surely would in The Fantastic. Indeed, we are told twice about Lester's lack of surprise, indicating Williams's awareness of the divergence of his narrative from Fantastic narratives. Lester's "Very well" is a simple and almost casual acceptance of her supernatural state, which she describes as a "fact." Our narrator apparently has borrowed, for a short time only, the Fantastic's method of signalling the entrance of the supernatural by focusing on the incongruity of the supernatural with the known natural world, and on its effect on the characters. Once Lester knows she inhabits a supernatural realm, Magic Realism's acceptance of the supernatural is established. The point seems to be that it is the not knowing, the not understanding, about the supernatural that is frightening, and not, as in The Fantastic, that the fear is reasonable because the supernatural threatens the harmony and order of the natural world.

Two pages later, the narrator himself emphasizes this acceptance of the supernatural by explaining some aspects of how this purgatorial London operates:

> But besides Richard, the only thing in which she had been interested had been the apparatus of mortal life; not people--she had not cared for people particularly, except perhaps Evelyn; she was sincerely used to Evelyn, whom she had known at school and since; but apart from Evelyn, not people--only the things they used and lived in, houses, dresses, furniture, gadgets of all kinds. That was what she had liked, and (if she wanted it now) that was what she had got. She did not, of course, know this, and she could not know that it was the sincerity of her interest that procured her this relaxation in the void. (9)

The narrator's words serve to fully validate and verify Lester's belief that she is living in a supernatural world, abolishing any lingering questions the reader might have as to the authenticity of Lester's experiences. The reader has little choice but to adopt the narrator's and protagonist's "way of thinking, and [to conceptualize] the fictitious world according to their perspective" (Chanady Magical Realism and the Fantastic 42).

When we consider the intrusion above, it may seem that All Hallows' Eve lacks the third defining characteristic of

Magic Realism, that of "authorial reticence." But the reticence of Magic Realism manifests itself in the narrator refraining from making any comments or raising suggestions about whether the character is dreaming or hallucinating, or, in other words, trying to give a rational explanation for the perception of the paranormal event. All Hallows' Eve nowhere violates this principle, for when its narrator intrudes, he does so in order to validate the characters' views and, as happens in the intrusion just quoted, in order to give more information about the supernatural world than the characters themselves could. This type of intrusion occurs in Magic Realism when the supernatural world is sufficiently foreign to the general reader that the narrator must give brief explanations of its operative principles so the reader can understand it (Chanady Magical Realism and the Fantastic 156). Rather than violating the principle of "authorial reticence," then, the narratorial intrusions in All Hallows' Eve serve to add to both the verisimilitude and the coherence of the supernatural world.

Once a reader learns, through this narratorial intrusion, that, in Purgatory, what a person wants is what a person gets, the reader understands why Richard appeared to Lester after she was aware that "somewhere in her there was a small desire to see someone" (3-4). The reader also understands why Richard faded after a frightened Lester warded him off. The intrusion, then, serves the "appeal to

memory," or the use of flashback, commonly found in Realism and there used to enhance the text's readability and coherence (Brooke-Rose 99). The intrusion also serves the "appeal to memory" by providing a flash-forward to the text's future. Because we have learned that Lester "was sincerely used to Evelyn," and that the plane has also killed Evelyn, we are justified in assuming that eventually Lester will meet with her friend. And so she does, two pages after the intrusion. Evidently, purgatorial London operates by at least one consistent rule or law.

The coherence of this supernatural world becomes more apparent as the chapter moves on. Evelyn and Lester, entering a new life in Purgatory, are like monks entering a life in Christ, for without the usual accompaniments of handbags and handkerchiefs, "They had nothing but themselves and what they wore--no property, no convenience" (12). Their own selves will be the instruments of their redemption or damnation.

The real meaninglessness of ordinary conversation is emphatically evident to Lester, at least. She describes Evelyn's unending gossip about a mutual friend, Betty, as "gabble" (14) and "babble" (15). The reader of Williams's novels will recognize the insensate talk of Lilith, one of the damned in Descent into Hell. Conversely, those phrases that seemed, in Lester's past, to hold little meaning, are here given a precision their utterers rarely intend.

Evelyn, for example, cannot understand why she is in the state she is in, because she has not "done anything." But her self-justification becomes her own self-accusation (18-19). Similarly, Lester's "O my God!" (19) turns from imprecation to invocation, much like the "(my God!) my God" at the end of G. M. Hopkins's sonnet "Carrion Comfort" (14).

Since words cannot be divided from their own proper meanings, there is evidently a rule of unity in operation in Purgatory. Simon Leclerc wishes to divorce words from their meanings, however, and in particular to reverse the power of the Tetragrammaton, the name of Yahweh, by pronouncing it backward. Betty overcomes his attempted reversals while she is asleep by calling out for Lester, for it seems that this name of love for her own, personal, microcosmic self is unified with the name of Love in the macrocosm, and her invocation of love is an invocation of Love.

Just as the rule of unity operative in Purgatory unites words and their meanings, time and experiences in time are united as well. Lester's past is present in her new "life." She remembers the airplane crashing, and "she felt a sudden renewal of the pain and of the oblivion" (11). She remembers riding home in a taxi with a date, and a taxi races through the park that is now before her (17). As Sebastian Knowles has noted in A Purgatorial Flame: Seven British Writers in the Second World War (170), readers are reminded of T. S. Eliot's "Little Gidding," where the

"compound ghost" (95) meets the narrator and tells of the last of three "gifts reserved for age" (129):

> And last, the rending pain of re-enactment
> Of all that you have done, and been; the shame
> Of motives late revealed, and the awareness
> Of things ill done and done to others' harm
> Which once you took for exercise of virtue.
> (138-42)

Lester possesses a growing awareness of how negative actions in the past have affected her and that she had better avoid repeating them. Her warding off of Richard has resulted in her loss of Richard, so she avoids leaving Evelyn. On the other hand, Lester is helped by memories of past actions that were positive. She had allowed the date in the taxi to hold her hand, even though she disliked the sensation, so when Evelyn now clutches at her arm, "her heart acknowledged a debt" (18) to Evelyn, and she allows her to hold on, despite Lester's revulsion at having "to endure the clinging of the dead" (18).

Indeed, the lines from Eliot's "Little Gidding" provide a very basic outline of what is to come for Lester. She experiences "the shame / Of motives late revealed" when she recognizes the true nature of her relationship with Evelyn, that it was derived from boredom and convenience, rather than a true, friendly liking of Evelyn (15-16). She likewise recognizes her motives in failing to comfort Betty

after Betty had been taunted by Evelyn, as a child. She had felt superior to Betty, that Betty should be stronger, and that comforting her would only reinforce her weakness. So she has "the awareness / Of things ill done and done to others' harm / Which once [she] took for exercise of virtue":

> Lester, with her own yearning in her bones, stirred restlessly, in an impatient refusal of her impatient impulse to go and tell [Betty] to stop [crying]. In those earlier days, she had not gone; she had hesitated a moment just so and then turned away. Betty must really learn to stand up for herself. "Must she indeed?" Lester's own voice said to her. (94)

And so Lester now decides to help Betty.

But once her decision is made, she is assailed by memories and images of Betty and all the times Lester failed to help her: "She saw herself ignoring Betty, snubbing Betty, despising Betty--in the dormitory, in the street, even in this hall" (123). The suicide in Descent into Hell has a similar experience in his purgatorial world: "after him followed a crowd of others, young men and children, and all of them with his face" (99). The suicide escapes his crowd by returning to life, but Lester is not given this choice, so she needs Betty's forgiveness for her past behaviour:

> She would not be able entirely to escape from those swirling images of the past, if they were indeed images and not the very past itself, by any other means than by Betty's dismissal of them. (130)

For Betty to give her forgiveness to Lester, she must remember, exactly and with precision, all the past events that now assail Lester. Lester must put Betty through all of it again, for the act of remembering, in Purgatory, is a re-experiencing of the thing remembered. Only thus can Lester be freed from her past; only thus can Lester be equal enough to Betty in order to be of any real help to Betty. Betty, of course, forgives, and then Lester must experience something which is scarcely short of a crucifixion in order to absorb and re-direct the evil purpose Betty's father, Simon Leclerc, has for his daughter.

Purgatory operates on a few laws other than that of the unity of time, but this last is the law that is explored most fully in All Hallows' Eve. Once the reader learns, along with Lester, the way the purgatorial world works, learns it rules and laws, the mysterious becomes understandable and navigable. The very consistency of the rules enhances the coherence of the supernatural world in this novel. And, of course, the exposition of a supernatural world that operates by laws that are as consistent and unalterable as are natural laws, renders that

world relatively familiar to the reader. Chanady calls this practice "a good illustration of the 'naturalization' of the supernatural in magical realism" (Magical Realism and the Fantastic 104).

Williams has availed himself of as many methods as possible in achieving this naturalization. He has found in Lester an appropriate mediator between the two worlds of the text and between the text and the reader. He enhances the verisimilitude of the supernatural by using characteristics borrowed from Realism. His narrative techniques are also borrowed from Realism, and both his main character and narrator accept the supernatural as fact. His use of Fantastic signals manages to "fantasticize" the natural world of the text, thus increasing the credibility of the supernatural world. The effects of all these methods of naturalization are increased by the fact that All Hallows' Eve begins in the supernatural world, plunging the reader and the main character into Purgatory, forcing them to make their own way, and therefore lending to this supernatural world the vividness and dominating impression inherent in all beginnings of all novels.

But a Magic Realist writer also strives to represent the "real" world in his or her text. The narrator of All Hallows' Eve adeptly manages this in a very few pages at the beginning of the second chapter, where the reader moves fully into the novel's natural world.

Many details refer to known places that the reader can identify, the "parallel story" of geography used in Realism (Brooke-Rose 100). The Houses of Parliament, the Tube, and St. Paul's are all mentioned in the first three pages of the chapter. The "parallel stories" of societal institutions, such as the Crown, the Press, and the Foreign Office, are also referred to. Furthermore, all details about the Second World War add up to the "parallel story" of history. These "parallel stories" quickly create "the effect of [the] real while allowing economy of description" (Brooke-Rose 100).

Realism's "appeal to memory" (Brooke-Rose 99) is here, when we are told about Richard's past work at the Foreign Office, or Jonathan's work as "one of the official war-artists" (24). "Redundancy" (Brooke-Rose 99) is also here, for we are told about Richard's habitual actions, "in his office while he read Norwegian minutes, in the Tube while he read the morning paper, at a bar while he drank with a friend" (24). This is certainly a world consistent with our own, where "natural" laws operate. Lester is dead and buried: "The plane crash had been explained and regretted by the authorities. Apologies and condolences had been sent to Mrs. Furnival's husband and Miss Mercer's mother" (23). Quite neatly, the narrator has not only made it clear to the reader that he or she is now in a "natural" world, but he has also confirmed the previous chapter's speculations about Lester's state. These devices of Realism effectively re-

present the "real" in All Hallows' Eve.

In the Fantastic, narrator and characters affirm the exclusive validity of the rational, scientifically verifiable, natural world. In Magic Realism, however, narrator and characters affirm a world view that includes the supernatural, so supernatural events are presented as equally valid, as equally "real" as are the normal, rational events. We have observed how Williams, by adapting many of the characteristics of Realism, has managed to raise the supernatural elements of All Hallows' Eve to a level of verisimilitude equal to the verisimilitude of the natural world. The credibility of the supernatural world is further emphasized by the fact that all the novel's characters, not just Lester and the narrator, as we have already noted, fully accept the presence of the supernatural world.

For example, Evelyn at first speaks as if she were not dead, but Lester is so horrified at this "death mimicking a foolish life" (15) that she disallows this kind of talk. Evelyn is then forced to recognize her own purgatorial existence which she describes as "horrible" (21), and affirms this existence insofar as she complains about it continuously and seeks to escape it at the first opportunity by returning to life in the form of a hideous dwarf, its body magically created by Simon the Clerk.

The narrator informs the reader about Simon's history of education in magic and in the wielding of supernatural

power. Simon so affirms the supernatural that the novel is mainly about Simon's attempt to dominate both natural and supernatural worlds through supernatural means. Similarly, the narrator tells us about Lady Wallingford's history of association with Simon, so she has both witnessed and participated in his magical ceremonies. Indeed, her daughter Betty was conceived in order to provide Simon with a link between the natural and supernatural worlds.

Betty therefore lives in both worlds, even though in her natural existence she knows nothing of her spiritual existence, much like the Pauline we first meet in Descent into Hell. But after Lester's intervention, Betty is able to integrate her two selves and to claim her power in the natural world by virtue of her supernatural strength, thwarting Simon's plans for her destruction.

Richard Furnival is shocked by his initial encounter with his dead wife, but when he sees her again, he is impressed by her "vigor of existence" (48) and discusses how inappropriate the term ghost is to describe her, for he has seen "an actual Lester" (95). In successive encounters, he greets her and speaks to her as if she were still alive.

And Jonathan Drayton, the artist, is a Catholic and so already believes in the numinous. When Richard relates how he has seen the dead Evelyn appear at Simon's call, Jonathan's first instinct is to send for a priest (145), or in other words, to solve this problem by spiritual,

supernatural means. If All Hallows' Eve were Fantastic, Jonathan would turn to more rational explanations of the problem. Furthermore, Jonathan's painting of the City of London displays the full co-inherence of the natural world with the world of eternal Light, and he claims to have done so merely by "common observation and plain understanding," or, in other words, simply by noticing and re-presenting in the painting what is actually before his eyes when he views the City. Jonathan claims to actually see how the supernatural order informs the natural world.

All of the main characters and even the narrator in All Hallows' Eve, then, have a world view which includes the supernatural. The reader is therefore forced to adopt their perspective, since no contrasting world view is presented in the text.

Because, in Magic Realism, supernatural events are presented as equally valid as the normal, rational events, the supernatural is not necessarily threatening to the natural order. Indeed, in All Hallows' Eve, the supernatural has a very positive relationship with the natural world. This positive relationship is established by the facts that the novel's protagonists come from both worlds, and that main events in the plot involve positive exchanges between both worlds.

Lester is, of course, the main protagonist, working out her Redemption in Purgatory by facing her past, learning to

love the living Richard more deeply, seeking the living Betty's forgiveness, and by actually saving Betty's life through substituting herself for Betty during Simon's attempt to murder his daughter.

Betty, living in both worlds, demonstrates within herself the positive relationship between the spiritual and natural planes. Her spiritual self is strong, loving, and happy, and it tries to bolster the courage of her weak, fearful, and sad natural self. When her life is saved by Lester, she is able to integrate her two selves, and is finally able to be free from Simon's will. Before this, her love for Jonathan interfered with Simon's magic to a certain extent, but Betty ultimately needed help from the supernatural Lester to be completely free from Simon's control. Betty also, of course, forgives Lester, thereby helping Lester to achieve her Redemption. Betty also attempts to help Evelyn, though she is unsuccessful, because Evelyn wilfully chooses a path of loneliness and hatred. But the positive exchanges between natural and supernatural are nevertheless clear in the relationships between Betty's two selves, and between Betty and Lester.

A Magic Realist novel is mainly distinguished by a lack of unresolved antinomy between natural and supernatural. Williams's <u>All Hallows' Eve</u> goes beyond this mere lack and elucidates a positive relationship between the two worlds. But the novel also concerns itself with unresolved antinomy,

centred in the character of Simon.

Simon's character is an "amalgamation of realism and fantasy," as Flores has said of the entire genre of Magic Realism (in Chanady Magical Realism and the Fantastic 27). An adept in the occult "sciences" may not seem a particulary realistic character to most readers, but it must be remembered that Williams was, in fact, personally acquainted with such people. Bernadette Bosky's essay, "Even an Adept: Charles Williams and the Order of the Golden Dawn," tells us that sometime before 1920, Williams joined a secret occult order called The Fellowship of the Rosy Cross, under the leadership of Arthur E. Waite. Waite had formerly been a member of a similar occult order called The Order of the Golden Dawn, famous today mainly because W. B. Yeats had been a member. Waite left the Golden Dawn and founded his own derivative order because adepts like the infamous Aleister Crowley had begun to predominate in the Golden Dawn, adepts who wished to make their magic in order to serve personal ends of power (Bosky 28-29). Waite firmly believed that occult knowledge should be transcended for higher spiritual states (Bosky 29), and Williams's works seem to reflect Waite's view, for the antagonistic character of Simon Leclerc uses his occult knowledge to gain personal power over the world and its people.

Besides having a basis in historical fact, however, the character of Simon is also drawn from the Fantastic. Simon

is, in and of himself, the breach in the natural world which must be overcome in order for harmony to be re-established. He is even described as "a breach in nature" by Richard (238). His goals are antinomic to the world order, for he is dedicated to the principle of division, rather than to the principle of unity which is the main operative principle of the novel's supernatural world. He wishes to divide words from their meanings, to divide Betty's spirit from her body, and to divide his human followers from their natural intelligence. He already has a great amount of potential power in this world, for he has created two duplicates of himself who are revered in China and Russia. He is waiting only to pronounce the Tetragrammaton backwards, thus reversing the order of creation (108), for it will be a removal of the meaning from the Word of Creation. It will also murder Betty, and thereby create an unnatural link with the world of the dead, which will give him power over that world and this. So Simon's character, besides being patterned upon actual occultists, also assumes the function of what would be the entire supernatural element in a Fantastic novel.

All Hallows' Eve, being a Magic Realist novel, asserts the "reality" of a supernatural order which complements the natural, which affirms and strengthens and expands upon the good of the natural order. Simon seeks to disrupt this harmonious relationship between the two planes of being. He

refuses to submit to natural laws, like that of his own death (119-20), and in that sense, he is "unnatural." His overweening ambition is also unnatural, for it is not possible for mere men to be omnipotent. His evil is precisely the same as Satan's, and in a Christian world, it is evil that constitutes the fantastic breach in the proper order of things which must be overcome in order to re-establish natural and supernatural harmonies. Accordingly, protagonists from both the natural and supernatural worlds of All Hallows' Eve move towards Simon's destruction.

The themes of right relationship and wrong relationship between natural and supernatural are also expressed by the narrator of this novel in his descriptions of two paintings by Jonathan Drayton. But before examining their thematic contribution, it would be well to explore another function the paintings have, that of informing the reader as to the genre of text he or she is reading, for Jonathan's paintings seem to be Magic Realist.

This is clearest when we consider the portrait of Simon preaching to his congregation. The rounded backs of the members of the congregation appear to be beetles' backs, and Simon, with a blank and meaningless stare, seems to be exhorting them to follow him down the cleft in a rock. Richard's description of the congregation clearly connects the painting to a well-known literary work: "men who were beetles, beetles who were men; insects who had just been

men, men who had just become insects. Metamorphosis was still in them" (44). Kafka's Metamorphosis serves as critic Spindler's example for what he terms "Ontological Magic Realism," which "resolves antinomy [between natural and supernatural] without recourse to any particular cultural perspective" (82). This kind of obvious intertextuality signals the reader as to the type of text he or she is reading. Chanady notes this in other Magic Realist texts, and offers the following comment:

> If the text is immediately situated by the reader within a given literary mode, then any minor detail which reinforces it is noticed and integrated within that particular reading code. (Magical Realism and the Fantastic 80)

The vision embodied in the painting is also observed to be present in the natural world of the text. Richard notes the similarity of Lady Wallingford to an "overgrown insect" (38), and is repeatedly touched by insect antennae when among Father Simon's followers (105-106). He finds himself "believing in the painting" (38), as an accurate representation of the natural world of the text. Jonathan, too, sees the painting "made actual and released from canvas" (59), when observing Simon in his studio:

> The figure was there; the blank window behind; he could not at this distance and in this light see through it; it was but an opening into bleakness.

> . . . He looked at the Clerk's face and it too hung blank as the window, empty of meaning. (59-60)

So the world in this painting is just like the world in the novel. This apparently Magic Realist painting is, therefore, a simile for this apparently Magic Realist novel.

Jonathan's other painting depicts the co-inherence of natural and supernatural in the City of London, a City recently damaged by bombing, but filled with a mysteriously sourceless light. While discussing this painting, the text echoes various critics' descriptions of Magic Realism. For example, Jonathan says he agrees with Sir Joshua Reynolds' opinion as to the source of all art being "common observation and a plain understanding" (28). Similarly, critic Seymour Menton feels that Magic Realists use heightened objectivity and precision "to invest reality with a touch of magic" (414). Furthermore, Jonathan claims to have represented, through this "common observation and a plain understanding," what he actually saw when viewing the City of London. And, of course, to writer Carpentier, Magic Realism is a way of depicting the actual presence of the marvellous in physical reality, which he calls "lo réal maravilloso" (in Merrell 8). As another example, Chanady says of Magic Realist art that it "was a second creation" ("Origins and Development of Magic Realism" 49). Richard accordingly describes the painting as "like a modern

Creation of the World, or at least a Creation of London" (28).

Magic Realist art depicts the real world, just as Jonathan's painting does, though it seems a world transformed. Spindler speaks of Magic Realism's "transformation of the everyday into the awesome" (190). Imbert similarly discusses how "Everyday objects appear in such a strange atmosphere that, although recognizable they shock us as if they were fantastic" (2). To Menton, the "strange atmosphere" becomes "an unexpected or improbable element that creates a strange effect" (412). To Hancock, the "unexpected element" is specifically the element of light, which he claims is characteristic of Magic Realism:

> By flooding an object in an extremely clear light, a familiar object suddenly has a new and strange sense of reality, and hints, as Kroetsch says . . . 'of a deeper meaning.' ("Magic Realism" 4)

And to Richard, of course, it is the element of light in Jonathan's painting that is most striking. The light seems to have no source, but it both illuminates, and is a compositional part of, the everyday scene of the City of London:

> It was everywhere in the painting--concealed in houses and in their projected shadows, lying in ambush in the cathedral, opening in the rubble, vivid in the vividness of the sky. It would

> everywhere have burst through, had it not chosen rather to be shaped into forms, and to restrain and change its greatness in the colors of those lesser limits. It was universal, and lived. (27-28)

And once again, it is difficult to distinguish between the world depicted in the painting of the City of Light, and the natural world of All Hallows' Eve. Richard finds that

> The world he could see from the window gaily mocked him with a promise of being an image of the painting, or of being the original of which the painting was but a painting. (147)

A seemingly Magic Realist work of art is again a simile for this Magic Realist novel.

Although the two paintings come from the same source, Jonathan's observations, they are quite different. The reader is meant to notice their differences because the text sets the two paintings in opposition to each other. We can tell that they each represent different values by the ways in which various characters react to the paintings. The living protagonists, Richard and Jonathan, are inspired to positive action by the painting of the City of Light (149), but are disturbed and "bewildered" (33) by the painting of Simon. Simon, clearly the antagonist of the novel, conversely considers his own portrait "a fact" and the other painting "a dream" of "fancies of light" that actually hurt

his eyes and make him "flinch" and "quiver" (60). Lady Wallingford, Simon's cohort, is saved from complete damnation at the end of the novel partly because she sees the portrait of Simon accurately. The members of the congregation, including herself, are indeed like mindless beetles and Simon is indeed like an imbecile in his belief of his own omnipotence. Her recognition and acceptance of the truth in Jonathan's painting, and therefore in her own life, however unpalatable to her that truth may be, saves her from death and damnation.

The paintings are also directly contrasted in the text, through Richard's perceptions:

> There, in the middle of [Jonathan's] room, lay the City, ruined and renewed, submerged and gloriously re-emerging. . . . The very rubble in the foreground was organic and rising; not rising as the beetles were to some exterior compulsion but in proportion and to an interior plan. The whole subject--that is, the whole unity; shape and hue; rubble, houses, cathedral, sky and hidden sun, all and the light that was all and held all--advanced on him. It moved forward as that other painting retired. The imbecile master and his companions were being swallowed up in distance, but this was swallowing up distance. There was distance in it and yet it was all one. As a painting is. (146)

The painting of the City of Light contains, and transcends, the opposites of ruin and renewal, death and rebirth. The natural laws of organic life operate here and inform all. Its dominant impression is one of unity. It even swallows up and transcends distance, which normally serves to separate objects from each other. Unity, not division, is its theme. The painting of Simon and his followers, on the other hand, shows them rising to Simon's imposed, external power. The power of organic, natural life is "interior," so such an external power is implicitly unnatural. Simon's dedication to division and separation and distance, of meanings from words, of Betty's spirit from Betty's body, of intellect from Humanity, consumes and destroys him, for he is, in the painting, being "swallowed up in distance." The paintings therefore represent wrong and right relationship to the supernatural. He who submits to natural laws is properly "in proportion" and will rise, be renewed, and re-emerge according to his God-given "interior plan." Simon refuses to submit to natural laws, like that of his own death, so is out of "proportion" and cannot rise, as Richard understands: "That blank face could never work miracles; or, if it could, then only miracles of lowering and loss. . . . The distance in the cleft . . . held no promise of a lordlier change" (44).

Through the paintings, then, Williams manages to image his entire novel's concern with right and wrong relationship

between natural and supernatural. Simon's wrong relationship is antinomic to the otherwise harmonious relationship between the two worlds of this Magic Realist novel, where both worlds are presented as equally valid and understandable through the use of Realistic writing's characteristics, through the fact that all characters fully accept the supernatural, and finally through the fact that both worlds operate on a system of laws that are easily understood. In All Hallows' Eve, readers are presented with a realistic world fully informed by divine light, which expands the modern, rational world view to a view that allows a relationship to the spiritual.

Conclusion

Charles Williams's novels all contain elements of The Fantastic and Magic Realism. These two types of fiction are alike in that they both juxtapose natural and supernatural worlds. However, they are different with respect to the kind of relationship that exists between natural and supernatural.

In The Fantastic, only the rationally organized, scientifically verifiable, natural world has any validity, so the presence of the supernatural is an unwanted, and often terrifying, intrusion. The Fantastic narrator maintains this antinomic relationship by focusing on the incompatibility of the two worlds, and maintains the mysterious, frightening quality of the supernatural element by refraining from providing too much information about it. Characteristics of Realism will therefore be restricted, for the most part, to the narrator's exposition of the natural world, although some characteristics may be adapted to help establish the coherence of the supernatural world.

Magic Realism, on the other hand, finds the supernatural world to be as valid as the natural, so its characters and narrator accept the presence of the supernatural element, which often exists in a positive relationship to the natural. The Magic Realist narrator is involved in trying to make his or her supernatural world as

believable as possible, so fully accepts its presence and refrains from judging its validity. The narrator of Magic Realist fiction further enhances the credibility of the supernatural world by adapting characteristics of Realistic fiction for the purposes of verisimilitude.

Charles Williams's world view is essentially Magic Realist mainly because it is essentially Christian, where divinity is both immanent and transcendent, or, to use Williams's own terms, the natural and supernatural co-inhere. The two planes are not necessarily antinomic, and often have a positive relationship with each other, as the activities of exchange and substitution move freely between the two worlds. Williams borrows a number of characteristics from Realistic fiction, including the narrative past tense and free indirect discourse, to ensure the verisimilitude and coherence of both his natural and supernatural worlds. In Williams's essentially Magic Realist world view, however, there is always an element of unresolved antinomy. The aspect of evil threatens to disrupt or destroy the harmonious relationship between natural and supernatural. Evil elements must be purged from the narrative world in order to re-establish its harmony. Evil therefore carries the function generally carried by the entire supernatural element in works of Fantastic fiction. In deciding whether one of Williams's novels is Fantastic or Magic Realist, the reader must consider how much of the

narrative focuses on unresolved antinomy.

The Place of the Lion is a novel of The Fantastic because the eruption into England of archetypal beasts threatens the very existence of the narrative world, so they must be returned to their proper and separate supernatural plane in order to re-establish harmony. The novel consistently focuses on the logical impossibility of the presence of the supernatural event, on the astonishment and terror its characters experience when encountering the supernatural, and on the destruction of the known world by the supernatural. But many of the novel's characters nevertheless accept the supernatural's presence, and one character, Anthony Durrant, brings about the healing of his world by wielding supernatural power. Furthermore, the archetypal beings are described in great detail, a fact which works against the purposes of The Fantastic, which usually seeks to maintain a tone of mystery and uncertainty by refusing to give much information about the supernatural. In spite of these Magic Realist elements, however, The Place of the Lion remains Fantastic, because the narrative focus is overwhelmingly on the mutual exclusivity of the natural and supernatural worlds.

Descent into Hell is Magic Realist, for many of its characters accept the spiritual and learn to live in a greater and greater harmony with the supernatural. The destructive strength of the supernatural is not emphasized,

and whatever evil elements exist, they are not as directly threatening to the harmony of the world as they are in The Place of the Lion. Pauline, for example, may feel directly threatened by her double, but she ultimately finds it to be her strong and joyful spiritual Self. Wentworth's evil destroys only himself, threatening only Adela, and this threat is never actually realized. Lily Sammile's double, Lilith, tempts Pauline to a certain extent, but Pauline's early initiation into the life of the spirit, through Peter Stanhope's substitution, delivers her from the evil whose only real triumph is in bringing a flu-like illness to some of the inhabitants of Battle Hill. So, even though natural and supernatural evil creates a breach that must be healed, the force of natural and supernatural harmony is always stronger in this apparently Magic Realist world.

All Hallows' Eve also seems to be Magic Realist. The narrator and all of the novel's characters fully accept the presence of the supernatural, and much of the novel focuses on the positive relationship between natural and supernatural. Indeed, the reader perceives many of the events of the novel through the supernatural character of Lester Furnival, a ghost oddly suited to mediate between her plane of existence and the reader's. The only note of unresolved antinomy in a novel that otherwise means to resolve antinomy between natural and supernatural centres in the character of Simon, whose wrong relationship to the

supernatural is again the breach that evil creates in the Christian Magic Realist world of Charles Williams's works.

Magic Realism began as a term applied to the visual arts but soon was applied to a type of literature from Central and South America. These works juxtaposed the natural, rational, logical world of the conquering European culture and the often superstitious and religious supernatural worlds embraced by the indigenous peoples. Latin American writers found in Magic Realism a way to include "a magical world-view existing in objective reality" with the world view of a dominant rational culture (Chanady "Origins and Development" 56). In addition, as Spindler has noted, "Magic Realism . . . furthers the claims of those groups which hold these [magical, irrational] beliefs to equality with the modernising elites which govern them" (82), or, in other words, Magic Realism allows the marginalized a voice equal to the voice of the mainstream culture.

Williams himself is marginalized in twentieth-century English literature precisely because of his Christian beliefs. The modern insistence on rationality and on belief only in what is scientifically verifiable, pushes Williams to the outer edges of a circle whose centre is occupied by most modern writers. His therefore ex-centric, eccentric world view tries to raise the level of verisimilitude of the world of Christian belief to the same level as that of the

wholly logical world. So Magic Realism serves Williams's partially didactic purpose, and indeed it seems that a Christian who truly believes in the immanent and transcendent divinity must of necessity write Magic Realist works, where the natural and supernatural co-inhere and the exchanges and substitutions between the two worlds can indeed take place. The ill-use of supernatural power and the wrong kind of relationship to the numinous create a breach in the Christian Magic Realist world, and these kinds of evil must be routed in order to re-affirm the harmony of natural and supernatural. Accordingly, Williams gives to evil what is the function of the entire supernatural element in Fantastic works. If the supernatural is largely disruptive, as it is in Williams's first five novels, including The Place of the Lion, we have novels that are mainly Fantastic in tone and structure with some Magic Realist elements. But Williams's last two novels, Descent into Hell and All Hallows' Eve, are mainly Magic Realist worlds threatened by the fantastic breach of evil.

The ambiguities present in these works, and indeed in all works of Magic Realism, because of the juxtaposition of contradictory world views, are present in Williams's thought as a whole, for he strongly affirms the value of truth, accuracy and fact while asserting the presence of the numinous. Indeed, his insistence on truth and intelligent discrimination lends a deal of force to his fictive

supernatural worlds, bringing the bright light of reason to his ambiguities of heaven.

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